

DC[®] AND MARVEL[®] PRESENT:

\$2.50

BAT MAN

VS.

THE
INCREDIBLE

HULK[®]

THE BLAZING BATTLE YOU
NEVER EXPECTED TO SEE!

ALSO FEATURING THE VILE
VILLAINY OF THE **JOKER**
AND THE **SHAPER OF WORLDS!**

C-755

THE ORIGIN OF

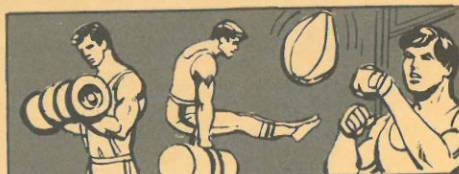
CREATED BY BOB KANE



WHEN YOUNG BRUCE WAYNE SAW HIS PARENTS MURDERED BEFORE HIS EYES, HE VOWED TO SPEND HIS LIFE MAKING WAR ON ALL CRIMINALS...



TO THIS END, HE PUSHED HIMSELF TO THE VERY LIMITS OF HUMAN ENDURANCE, TRAINING HIS BODY TO PHYSICAL PERFECTION--



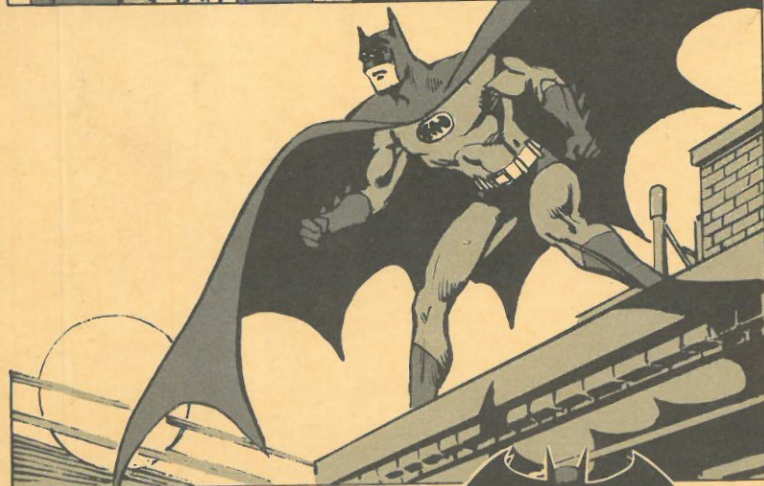
--AND HONING HIS MIND TO RAZOR SHARPNESS, BECOMING A TOP CRIMINOLOGIST AND A MASTER OF DEDUCTIVE REASONING...

HE DEVOTED HIMSELF TO THE ART OF DISGUISE, UNTIL HE WAS VIRTUALLY A HUMAN CHAMELEON WHO COULD ASSUME A THOUSAND DIFFERENT FACES--



--AND HE DEVELOPED A UNIQUE UTILITY BELT, STOCKING IT WITH THE VARIOUS WEAPONS HE WOULD NEED TO AID HIM IN HIS NOBLE CRUSADE...

NOW, BY DAY, HE POSES AS A MILLIONAIRE PLAYBOY-PHILANTHROPIST, CHAIRMAN OF THE PRESTIGIOUS WAYNE FOUNDATION--



--WHILE, BY NIGHT, HE IS TRANSFORMED INTO A WEIRD FIGURE OF THE SHADOWS... A DARK AVENGER OF EVIL...



THE ORIGIN OF

CREATED BY STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY



WHEN DR. ROBERT BRUCE BANNER ATTEMPTED TO RESCUE A RECKLESS TEENAGER WHO HAD WANDERED ONTO THE TEST SITE OF THE TOP-SECRET GAMMA-BOMB--



--HE INSTEAD BECAME A VICTIM OF HIS OWN CREATION, BATHED IN UNIMAGINABLE ENERGIES AS THE GAMMA-BOMB EXPLODED!



NOW, IN TIMES OF STRESS, WHEN HIS PULSE QUICKENS AND HIS HEART POUNDS, THE RUSH OF ADRENALIN TRIGGERS A BIZARRE TRANSFORMATION--



--TURNING THE FRAIL BUT BRILLIANT PHYSICIST INTO SEVEN FEET, ONE THOUSAND POUNDS OF RAGING PRIMORDIAL FURY--



--A MONSTROUS MAN-BRUTE POSSESSED OF SEEMINGLY-LIMITLESS POWER--FOR THE Madder HE GETS, THE STRONGER HE GETS...

AND YET, THIS BRUTISH EXTERIOR HIDES A BEFOGGED MIND OF CHILDISH SIMPLICITY, A SPIRIT WHICH SEEKS ONLY TO BE LEFT IN PEACE...



THIS, THEN, IS BRUCE BANNER'S CURSE--FORCED TO SHARE HIS LIFE WITH THE MIGHTIEST MONSTER ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH...



BATMAN VS. THE INCREDIBLE HULK, Fall, 1981 (DC SPECIAL SERIES, Vol. 5, No. 27.) published four times a year by DC COMICS INC., 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10019. Copyright © 1981 by DC Comics Inc. and Marvel Comics Group, a division of Cadence Industries Corporation. All Rights Reserved. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. No actual persons, living or dead, are intended or should be inferred. Batman, Bruce Wayne, Commissioner Gordon, Alfred, The Joker, Killer Moth, Two-Face and the Scarecrow, and the visual depictions thereof are trademarks of DC Comics Inc. Incredible Hulk, Bruce Banner, Shaper of Worlds, Abomination, the Leader, the Rhino, General Thunderbolt Ross, "Doc" Samson, and Rick Jones, and the visual depictions thereof are trademarks of Marvel Comics Group, a division of Cadence Industries Corporation. Printed in U.S.A.

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DC COMICS AND MARVEL COMICS PROUDLY PRESENT:

BAT MAN[®]

...IN A HISTORY-MAKING
CONFRONTATION WITH THE
MIGHTIEST MAN-BRUTE TO
EVER WALK THE EARTH...

THE
INCREDIBLE
HULK[®]



SO PULL
UP A RINGSIDE
SEAT FOR THE
SINGLE MOST ASTON-
ISHING EPIC IN THE
ANNALS OF
ADVENTUREDOM!
JOIN US TO
MEET...

THE MONSTER AND THE MADMAN

A SUPER-SIZED SPECTACULAR BREATHTAKINGLY BROUGHT TO YOU BY:
LEN WEIN, JOSE LUIS GARCIA LOPEZ, DICK GIORDANO, JOHN COSTANZA, GLYNIS WEIN
writer illustrator embellisher-editor letterer colorist
ALLEN MILGROM & JIM SHOOTER, CONSULTING EDITORS
WITH THANKS TO MARV WOLFMAN & MIKE DECARLO FOR THEIR HELP

PROLOGUE:

THE TEMPERATURE HIT 90° THIS HOT SUMMER'S DAY IN GOTHAM CITY-- AND THE OCCASIONAL ERRANT BREEZE WHICH NOW WHISPERS DOWN THE BENIGHTED STREETS DOES LITTLE TO DISPEL THE OPPRESSIVE HUMIDITY WHICH MAKES EVEN SLEEP A MOIST EFFORT...

CASE IN POINT: ONE HARVEY MAXWELL, WHO FOR MONTHS NOW HAS BEEN TALKING ABOUT BUYING AN AIR CONDITIONER--

--AND NOW IS PAYING THE PRICE OF HIS PROCRASTINATION.

TOSSING FITFULLY, HARVEY SUMMONS DREAMS OF ARCTIC ICE AND KEENING WINDS--

--IN A DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE THE SWELTERING HEAT!

AN EFFORT THAT SUCCEEDS--

EH?

--BEYOND HARVEY'S WILDEST EXPECTATIONS!

NO! THIS AIN'T POSSIBLE--!

TELL ME I'M STILL DREAMIN'!

'CAUSE IF I'M AWAKE--

--THEN I'VE GOTTA BE OUT OF MY MIND!!

AND THUS BEGINS THE NIGHTMARE!

THE RIVOLI THEATRE,
ON GOTHAM'S UPPER
EAST SIDE--



--WHERE SCORES OF 'B'
MOVIE DEVOTEES HAVE
COME THIS SMOLDERING
MIDNIGHT TO RELIVE THE
CELLULOID FANTASIES
OF THEIR YOUTH...



BUT WHILE MOST IN THE
AUDIENCE SIT WITH THEIR
EYES FIXED ON THE
SCREEN, THERE ARE
SOME WHO HAVE EYES
ONLY FOR EACH OTHER...

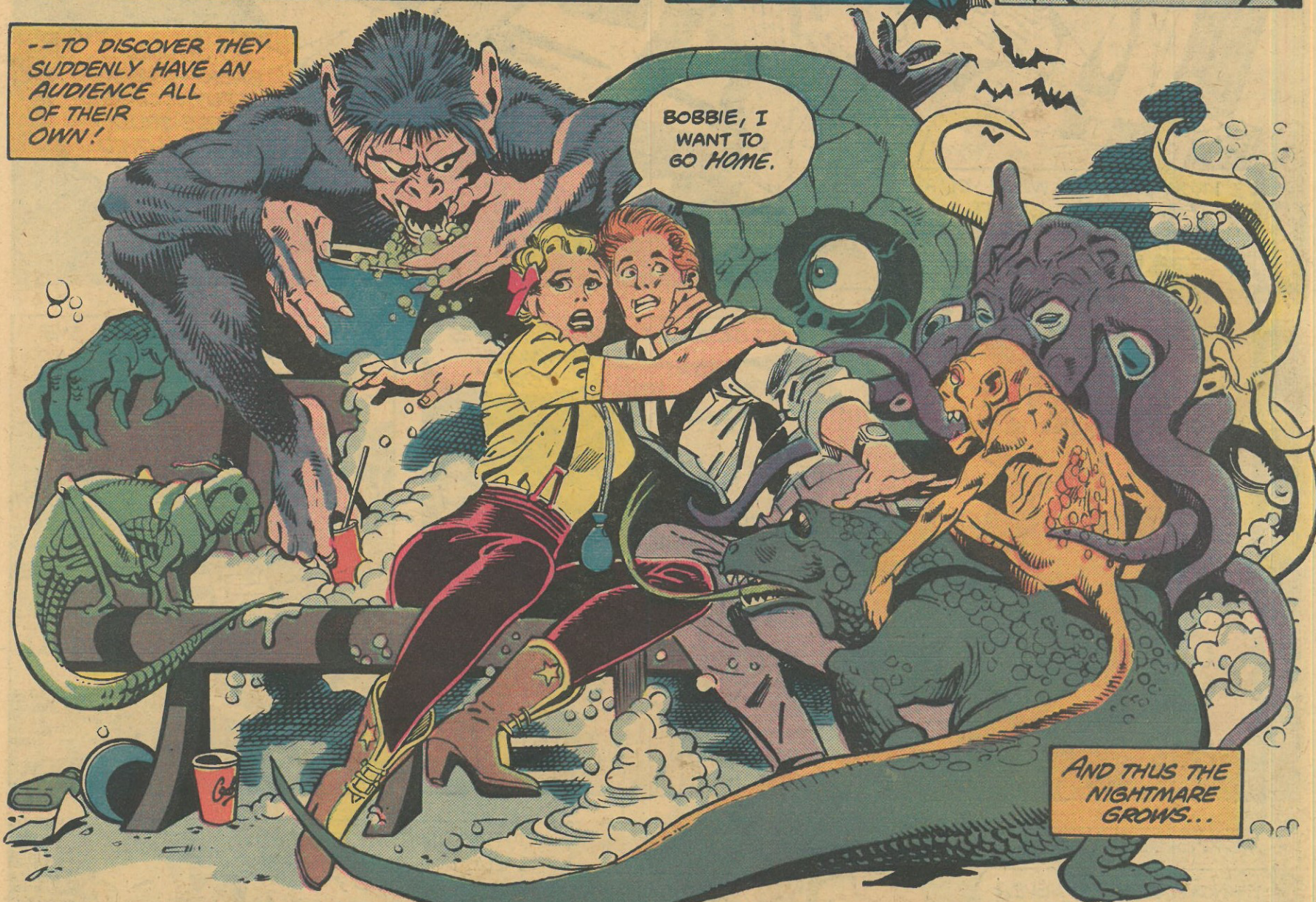


THAT IS, UNTIL THEY
OPEN THOSE STARRY
EYES FOR ONE BRIEF
MOMENT--



B-B-BOBBIIE...?

--TO DISCOVER THEY
SUDDENLY HAVE AN
AUDIENCE ALL
OF THEIR
OWN!



AND THUS THE
NIGHTMARE
GROWS...

WHILE, IN AN ISOLATED
WAREHOUSE ALONG
GOTHAM'S STEAMING
WATERFRONT...

YOU MUST ACT
QUICKLY-- THE PAIN
IS GROWING
UNBEARABLE!



HAVE I EVER
DISAPPOINTED
YOU, PAL?

WHATEVER ELSE MAY
CHANGE IN THIS
INCONSTANT WORLD OF
OURS, ONE THING
REMAINS CERTAIN--

--THE JOKER
ALWAYS DELIVERS!

SO JUST LAY
BACK--RELAX--
AND PUT YOURSELF
IN THESE TRUSTY
VELVET-GLOVED
HANDS!

I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOU'RE
AFTER, AND I'LL GET IT
FOR YOU...

...BUT
THEN,
FRIEND,
I'D BETTER
GET MINE!

GO QUICKLY, JOKER--TIME IS
RUNNING
OUT!

ISN'T IT
ALWAYS?

COME
ALONG,
BOYS-- WE
HAVE WORK
TO DO!

LIKE TWO-LEGGED RATS, THE
CLOWN PRINCE OF CRIME AND
HIS COHORTS MOVE THROUGH
THE DOCKSIDE SHADOWS--

--MUTTERING AS THEY GO...

Y'KNOW, I AIN'T NEVER
SEEN THE BOSS LIKE
THIS--!

IT'S ALMOST
LIKE HE'S
SCARED 'A THAT
FREAK IN THE
WAREHOUSE.

AH, KENNIE MY BOY, YOU
REALLY DON'T UNDERSTAND,
DO YOU?



WHAT I'M INVOLVED IN HERE IS A SIMPLE BUSINESS ARRANGEMENT!

JUST BUSINESS, KENNIE--



--AND, QUITE FRANKLY, NONE OF YOURS!

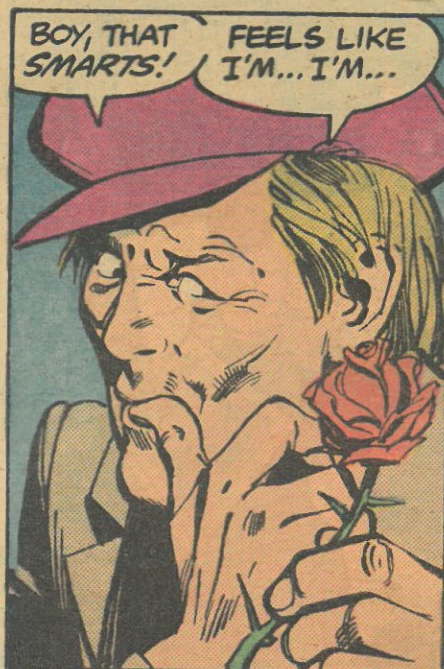
HERE-- CATCH!

HUH--?!!



OUCH!

BLASTED THORNS--! ONE OF 'EM STABBED ME--!



BOY, THAT SMARTS!

FEELS LIKE I'M... I'M...



NO! THE THORNS--! THEY'RE--



AARRGGHHH!



QUITE RIGHT, DEAR BOY-- THEY'RE POISONED!



I ALWAYS MAKE IT A POINT TO DIP MY DAILY BOUTONNIERE IN MY OWN SPECIAL JOKER-VENOM-- WHICH CAUSES AGONIZING DEATH WITHIN SECONDS!

SURE BEATS THE HECK OUT OF THE OLD SQUIRTING FLOWER GAG, DOESN'T IT, KENNIE?

KENNIE?

SORE LOSER!



LET THAT BE A LESSON TO YOU, KENNIE OLD SON--

THE JOKER NEVER KNOWS FEAR!



THE JOKER SIMPLY IS FEAR!

AND THIS IS THE NIGHTMARE SET FREE...

CHAPTER ONE: WHEN WAKES THE BEHEMOTH...!

ACCORDING TO HIS SECURITY PASS, HIS NAME IS DAVID BANKS-- HE HAS BEEN EMPLOYED HERE, AT THE BOTHAM CITY BRANCH OF WAYNE RESEARCH, FOR ALMOST A WEEK NOW, PERFORMING ODD JOBS AND GENERALLY DOING THE DONKEY WORK--

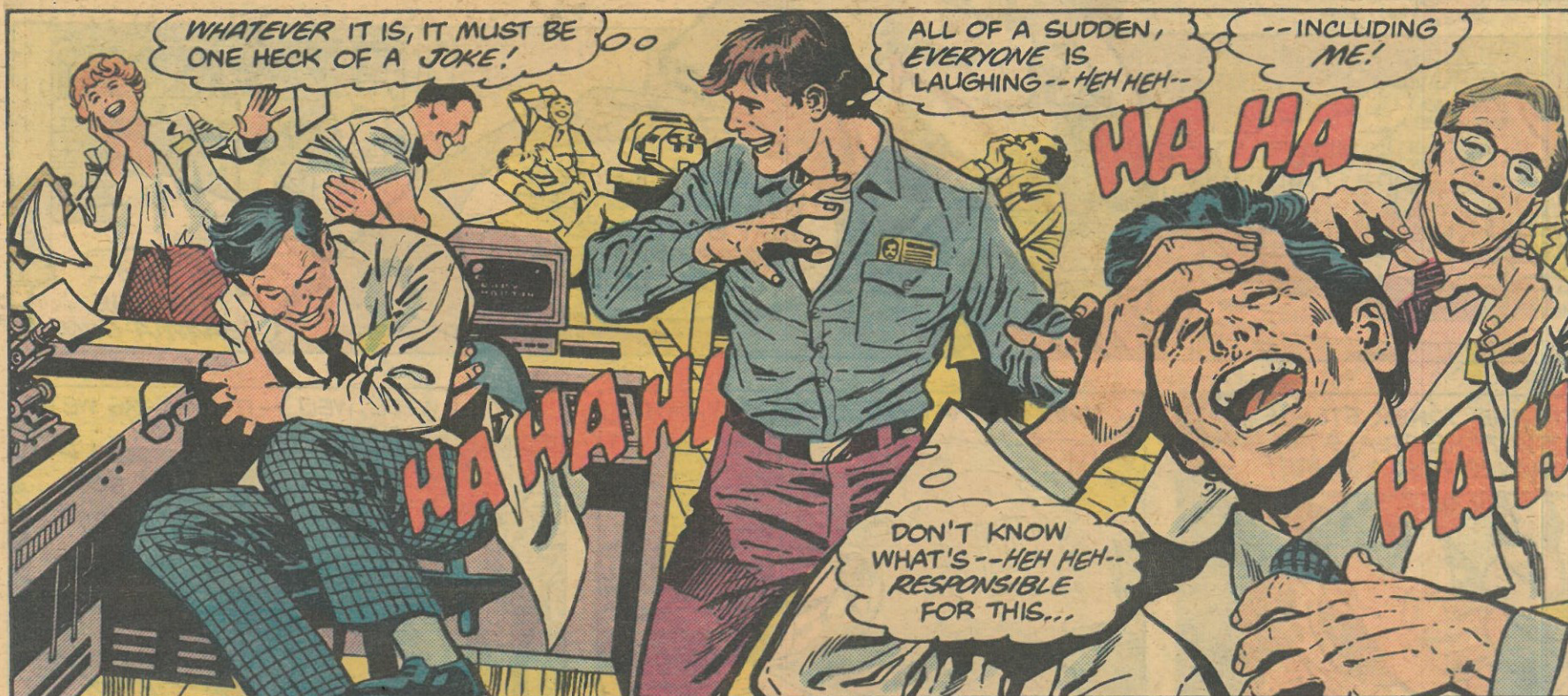
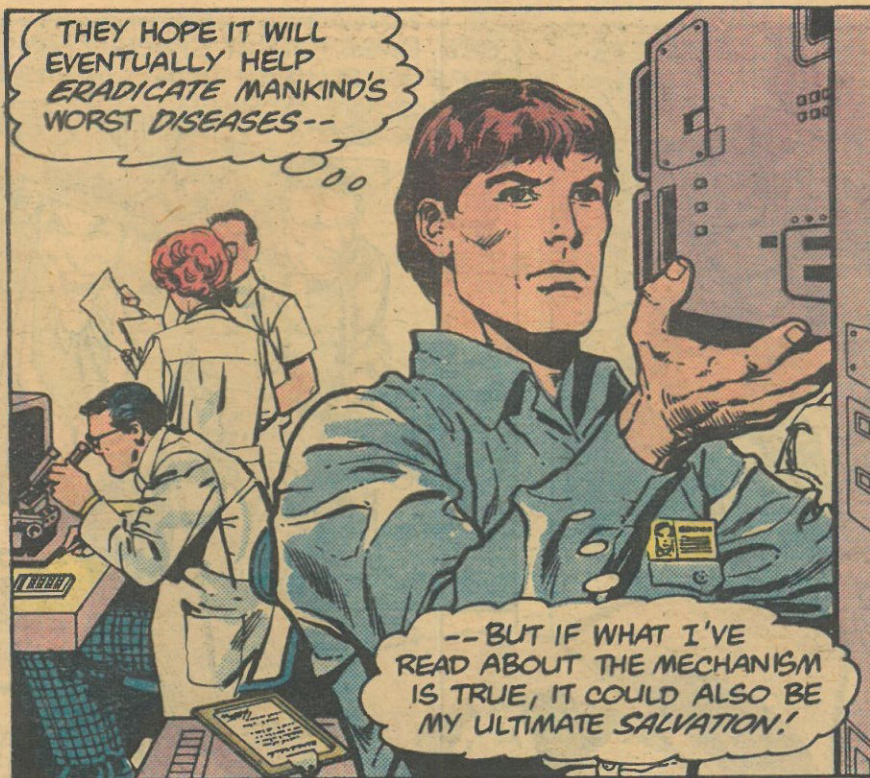
-- WHICH IS AN ALMOST-CRIMINAL WASTE OF HIS TALENTS!

FOR, IN TRUTH, HE IS DR. ROBERT BRUCE BANNER, UNQUESTIONABLY THE WORLD'S FOREMOST AUTHORITY ON THE EFFECTS OF GAMMA RADIATION--

-- AND A MAN WHO DWELLS FOREVER IN THE SHADOW OF A HORROR HE CANNOT CONTROL!

THIS IS NO WAY TO LIVE... HIDING BEHIND FORGED CREDENTIALS... JUMPING AT EVERY SUDDEN SOUND...

... BUT I HAD NO OTHER CHOICE!



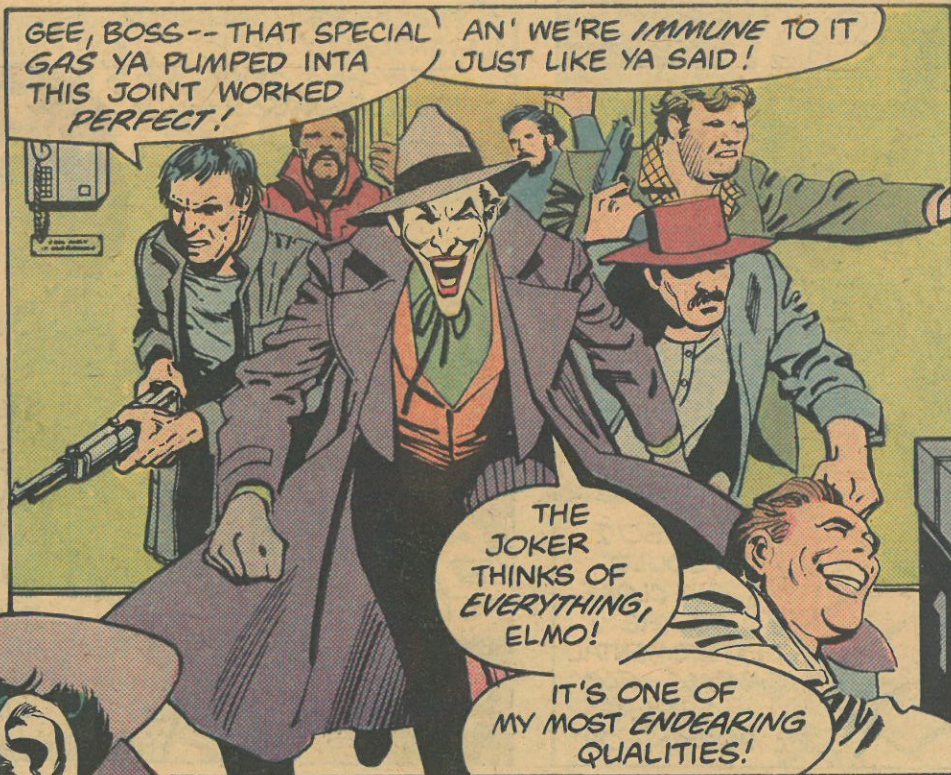


MAYBE TOGETHER WE CAN--

--HUH?

LAFAYETTE, I AM HERE!

NO...NOT HIM!

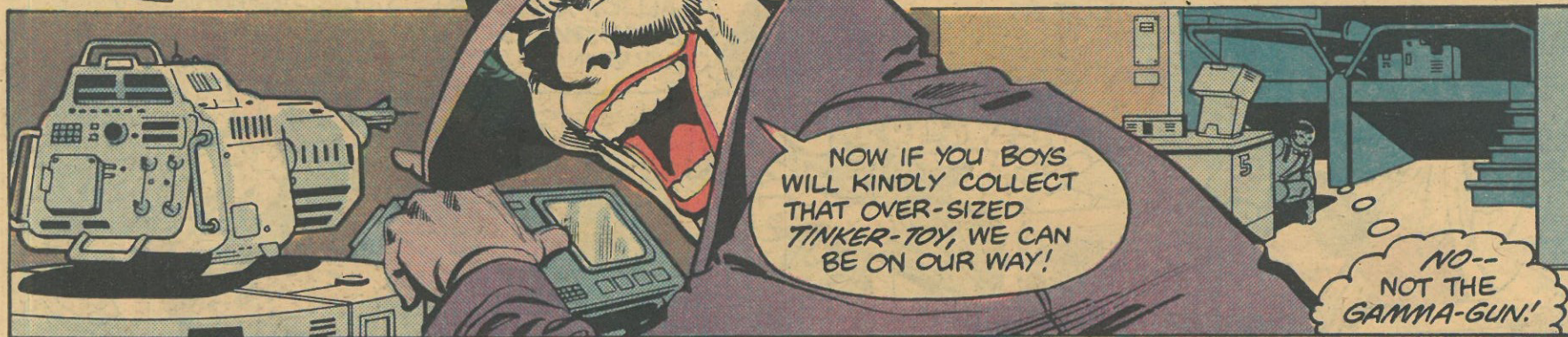


GEE, BOSS-- THAT SPECIAL GAS YA PUMPED INTO THIS JOINT WORKED PERFECT!

AN' WE'RE IMMUNE TO IT JUST LIKE YA SAID!

THE JOKER THINKS OF EVERYTHING, ELMO!

IT'S ONE OF MY MOST ENDEARING QUALITIES!



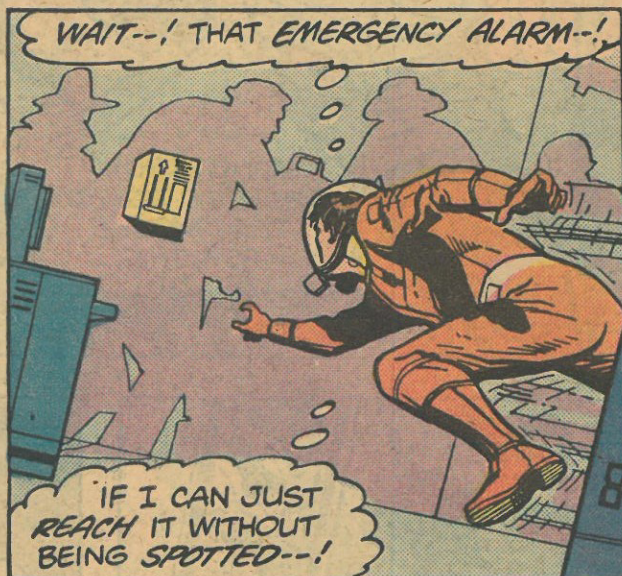
NOW IF YOU BOYS WILL KINDLY COLLECT THAT OVER-SIZED TINKER-TOY, WE CAN BE ON OUR WAY!

NO-- NOT THE GAMMA-GUN!



IF THE JOKER STEALS THAT, HE STEALS MY CHANCE FOR A CURE!

I'VE GOT TO STOP HIM-- BUT HOW?!



WAIT--! THAT EMERGENCY ALARM--!

IF I CAN JUST REACH IT WITHOUT BEING SPOTTED--!

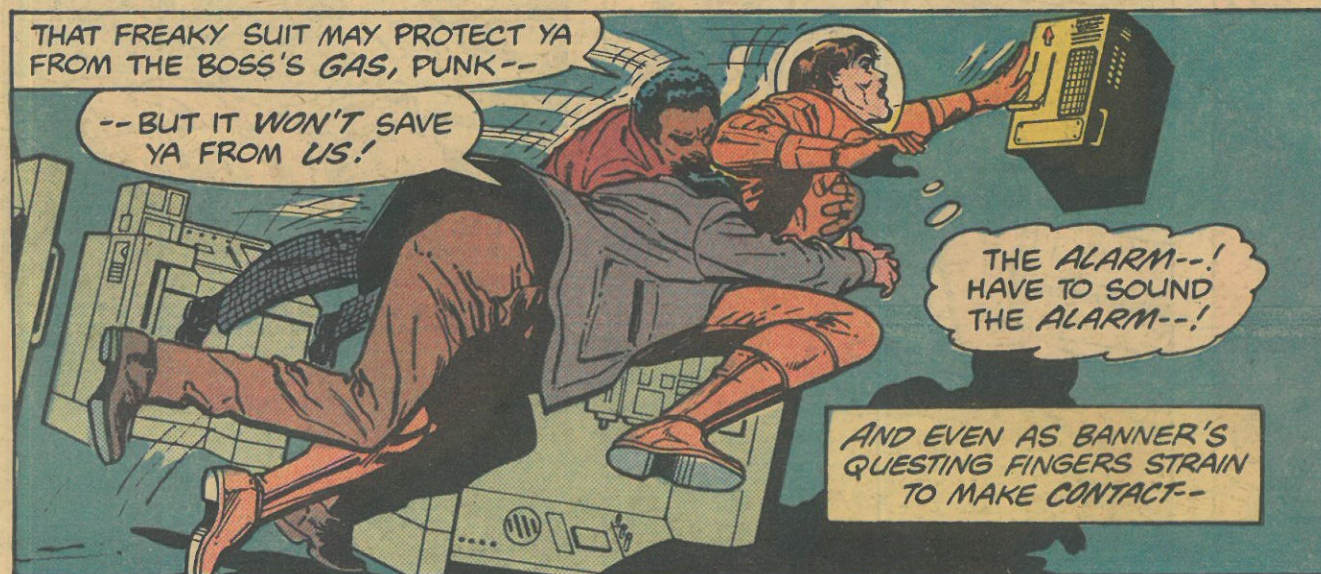


BUT...

WELL, WELL-- IT APPEARS WE'RE NOT ALONE IN HERE!

BOYS... MAKE US ALONE!

WIT' PLEASURE!

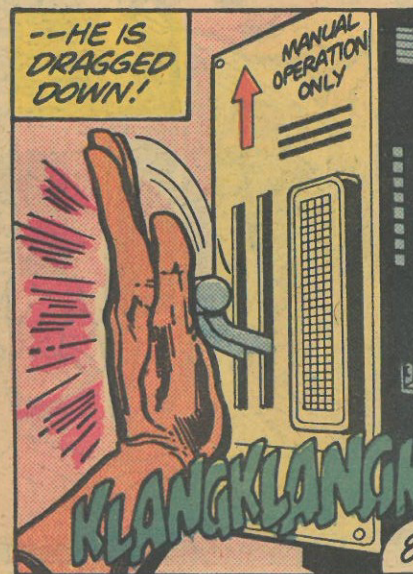


THAT FREAKY SUIT MAY PROTECT YA FROM THE BOSS'S GAS, PUNK--

--BUT IT WON'T SAVE YA FROM US!

THE ALARM--! HAVE TO SOUND THE ALARM--!

AND EVEN AS BANNER'S QUESTING FINGERS STRAIN TO MAKE CONTACT--



--HE IS DRAGGED DOWN!

MANUAL OPERATION ONLY

KLANGKLANGK

FRANTICALLY, THE FRAIL
PHYSICIST STRUGGLES
TO FREE HIMSELF FROM
HIS ATTACKERS--

--AN ADRENAL RUSH WHICH
ONCE MORE CHARGES HIS
GAMMA-IRRADIATED BLOOD--

--HIS HEART
POUNDING,
HIS PULSE
RACING--

--AND THUS
TRIGGERS
A MOST
ASTOUNDING
TRANSFOR-
MATION--

--FREEING NOT
BRUCE BANNER,
BUT RATHER THE
RAGING BEAST
WHO DWELLS
WITHIN HIM--

--THE BLUDGEONING BEHEMOTH WHO
WAS BORN IN THE NUCLEAR FURY OF
A GAMMA-BOMB EXPLOSION--

--THE ALMOST-MINDLESS HALF-
TON HORROR MEN HAVE COME
TO CALL...

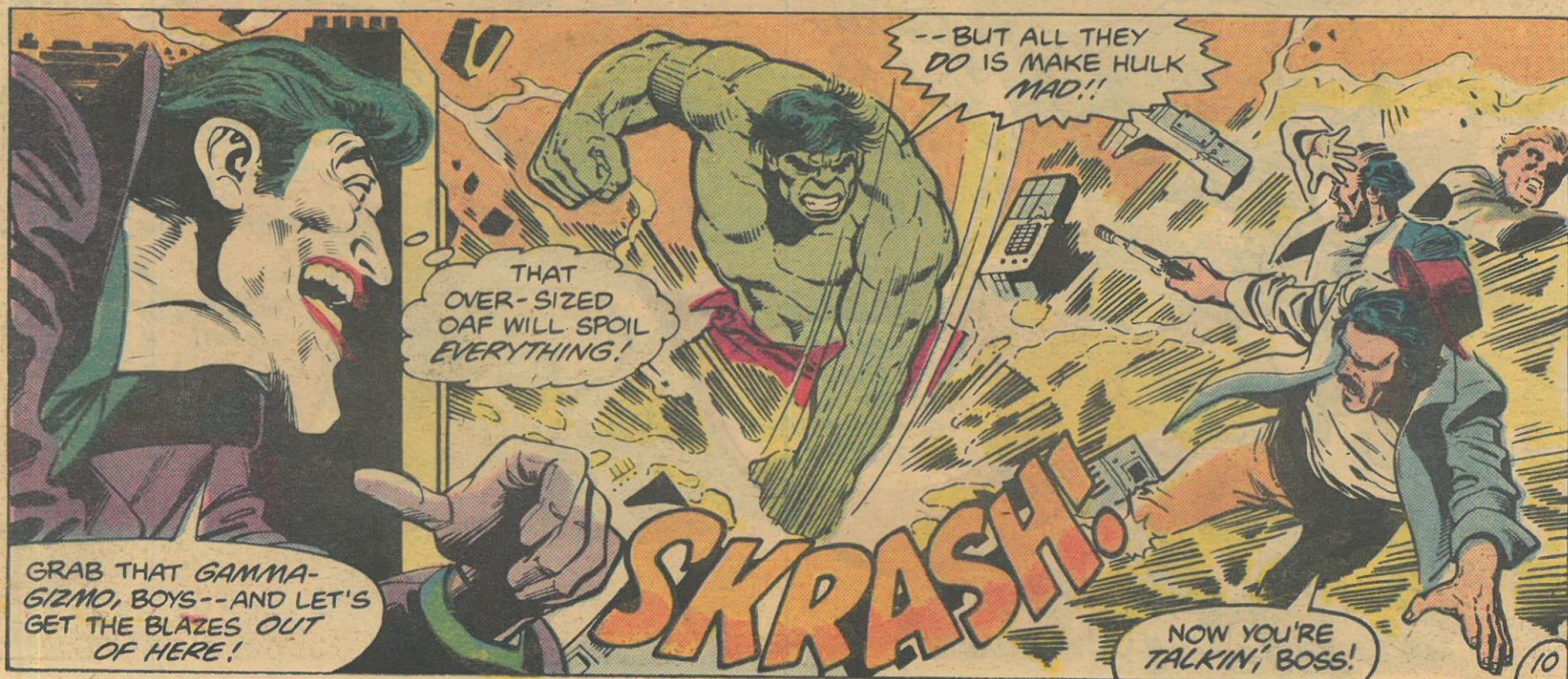
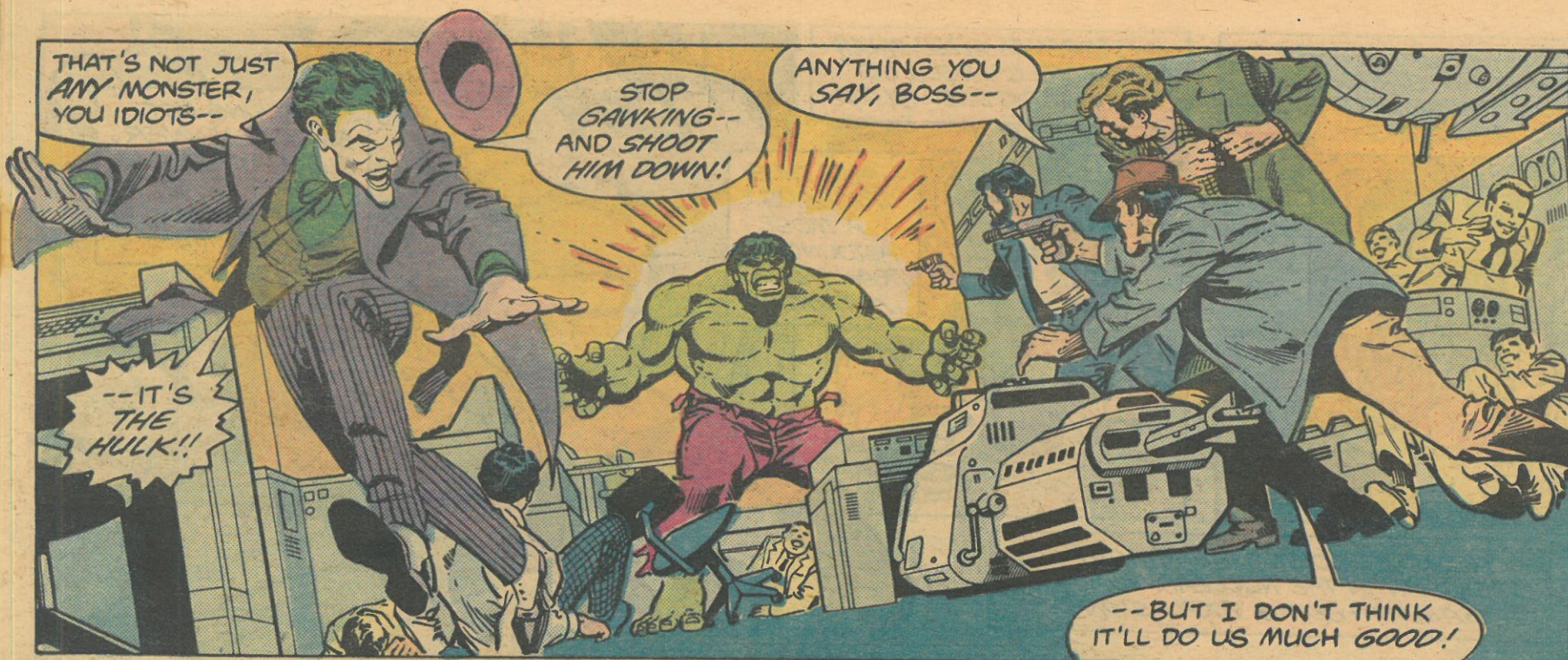
...THE INCREDIBLE
HULK!!

RRAARRGGGHHH!!

LEAVE HULK
ALONE,
PUNY HUMANS--

--OR HULK
WILL
SMASH!!

CRIPES!
THE PUNK'S
TURNED INTO
SOME KINDA--
MONSTER!

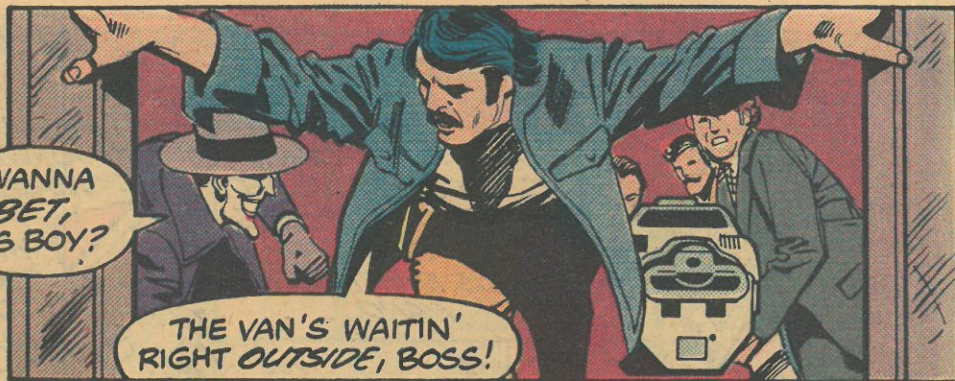




HE WHO STEALS AND RUNS AWAY LIVES TO LAUGH ANOTHER DAY!

I THINK SHAKESPEARE SAID THAT... OR WAS IT ROD MCKUEN?

NO! PUNY HUMANS WILL NOT ESCAPE HULK!



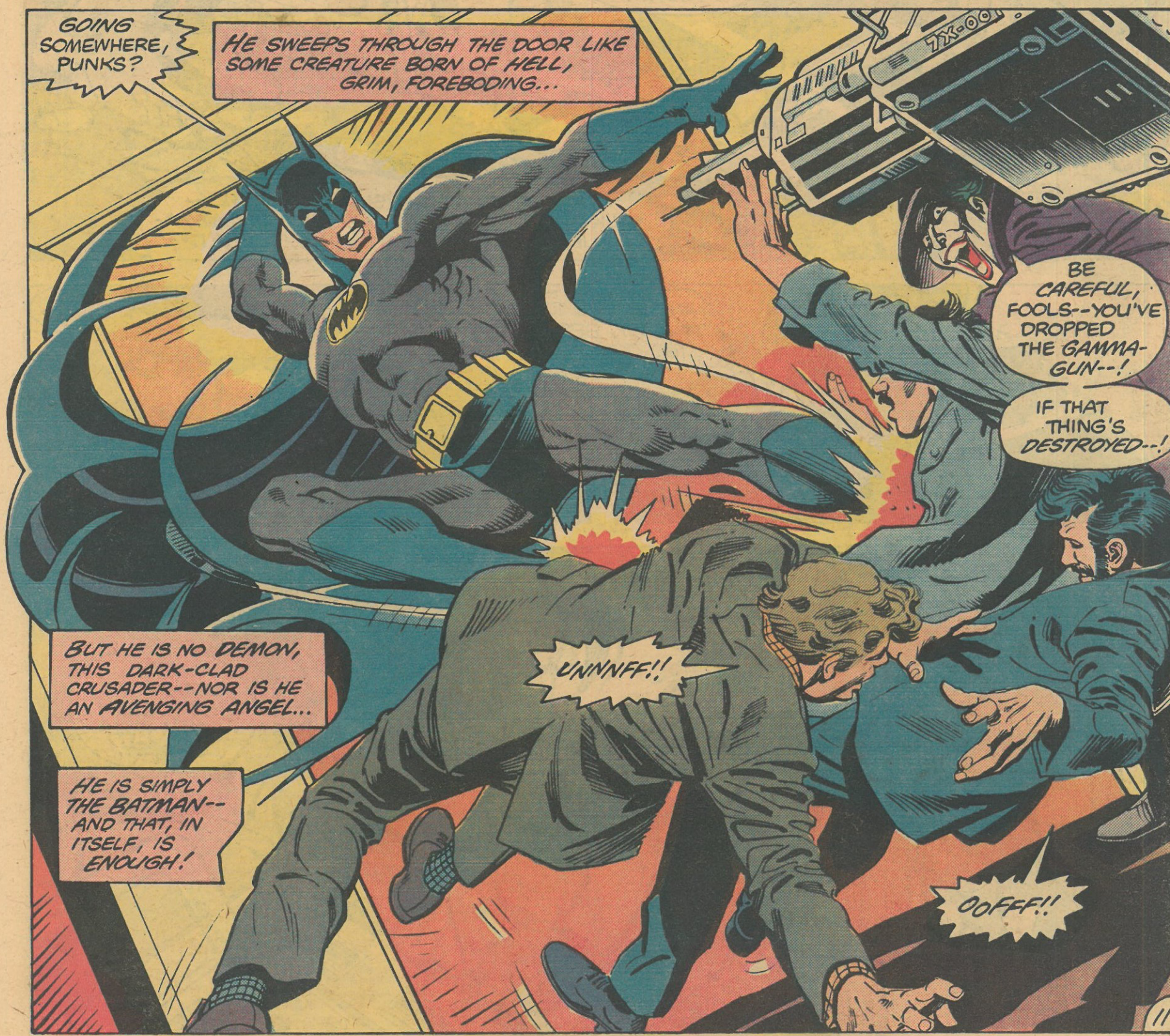
WANNA BET, BIG BOY?

THE VAN'S WAITIN' RIGHT OUTSIDE, BOSS!



THAT GREAT GREEN GORILLA WILL NEVER CATCH US ONCE WE--

UH-OH.



GOING SOMEWHERE, PUNKS?

HE SWEEPS THROUGH THE DOOR LIKE SOME CREATURE BORN OF HELL, GRIM, FOREBODING...

BE CAREFUL, FOOLS--YOU'VE DROPPED THE GAMMA-GUN--!

IF THAT THING'S DESTROYED--!

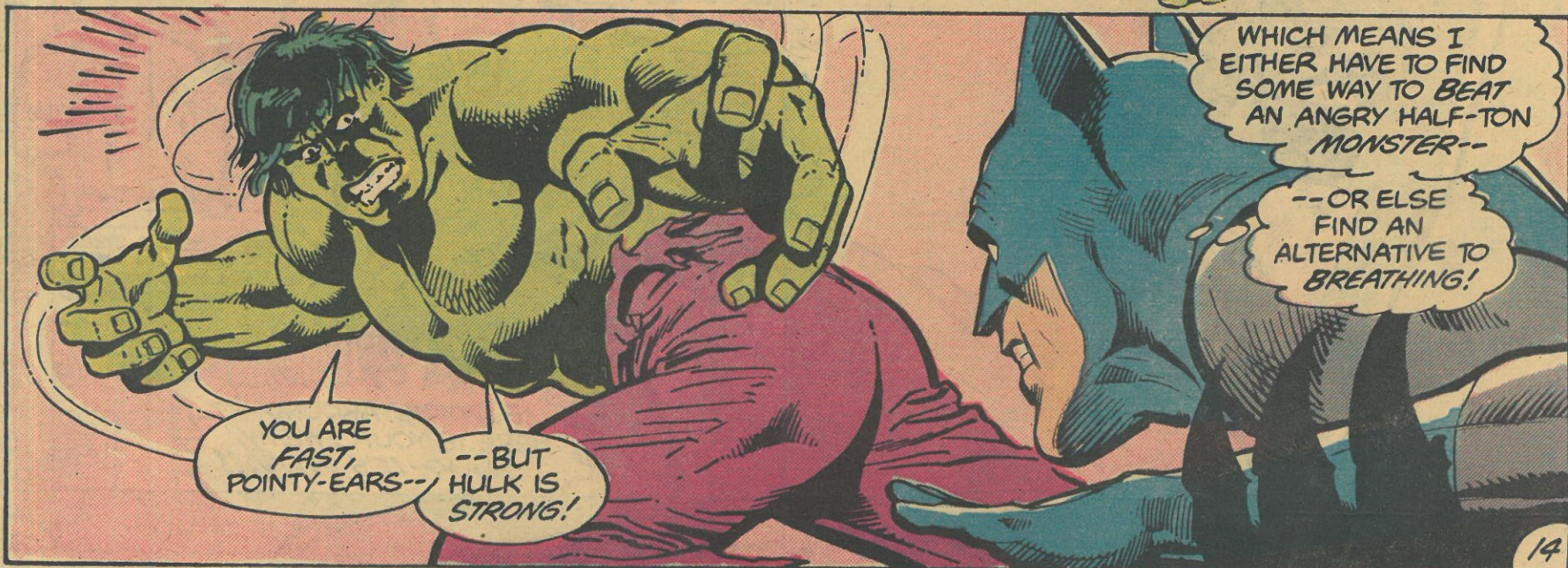
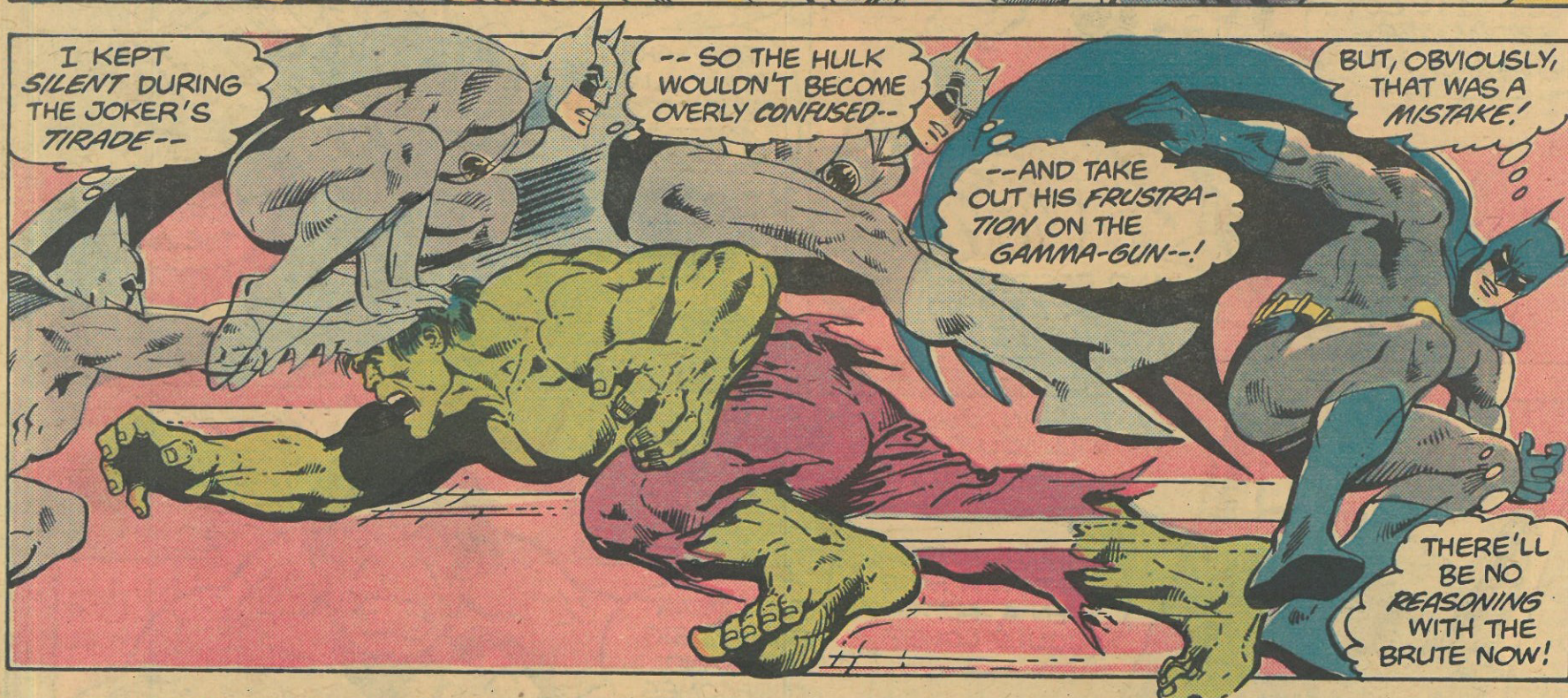
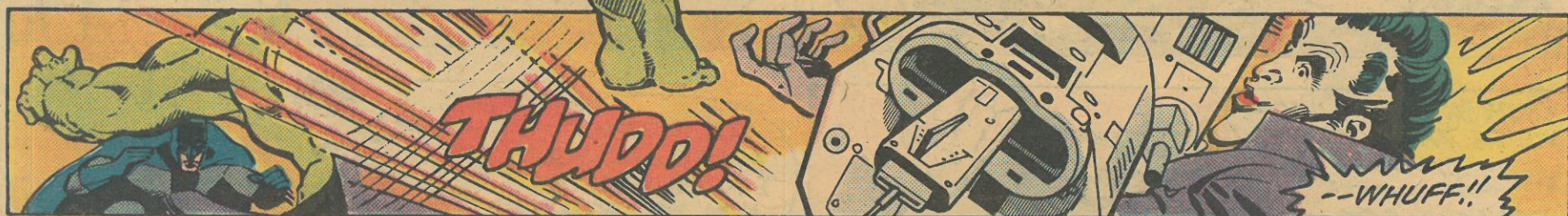
BUT HE IS NO DEMON, THIS DARK-CLAD CRUSADER--NOR IS HE AN AVENGING ANGEL...

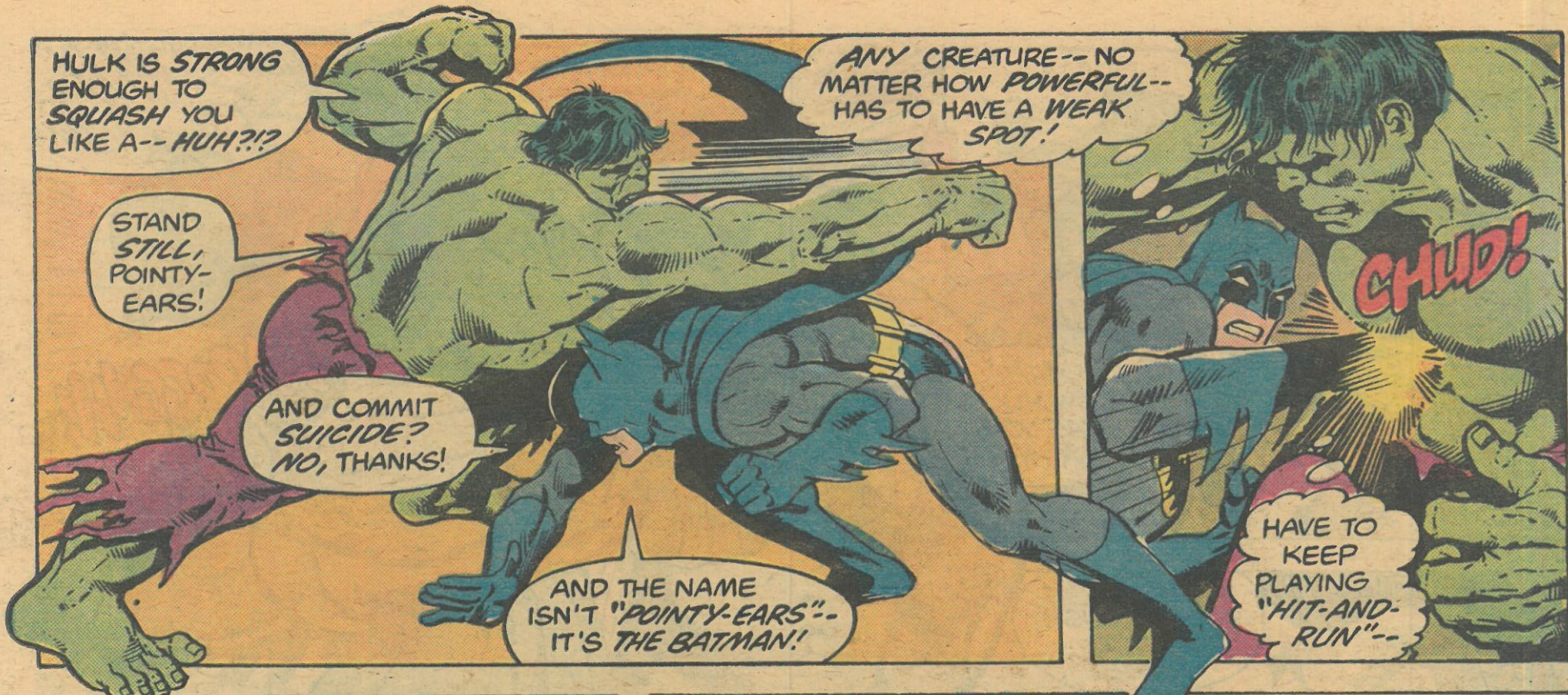
HE IS SIMPLY THE BATMAN-- AND THAT, IN ITSELF, IS ENOUGH!

UNNNFF!!

OOFFF!!







HULK IS STRONG ENOUGH TO SQUASH YOU LIKE A-- HUH?!!

ANY CREATURE-- NO MATTER HOW POWERFUL-- HAS TO HAVE A WEAK SPOT!

STAND STILL, POINTY-EARS!

AND COMMIT SUICIDE? NO, THANKS!

AND THE NAME ISN'T "POINTY-EARS"-- IT'S THE BATMAN!

CHUD!

HAVE TO KEEP PLAYING "HIT-AND-RUN"--



--TRY TO PARALYZE THE HULK'S NERVE-CENTERS--!

IT'S NOT MUCH OF A CHANCE--

THOK!

--BUT IT'S THE ONLY ONE I'VE GOT!



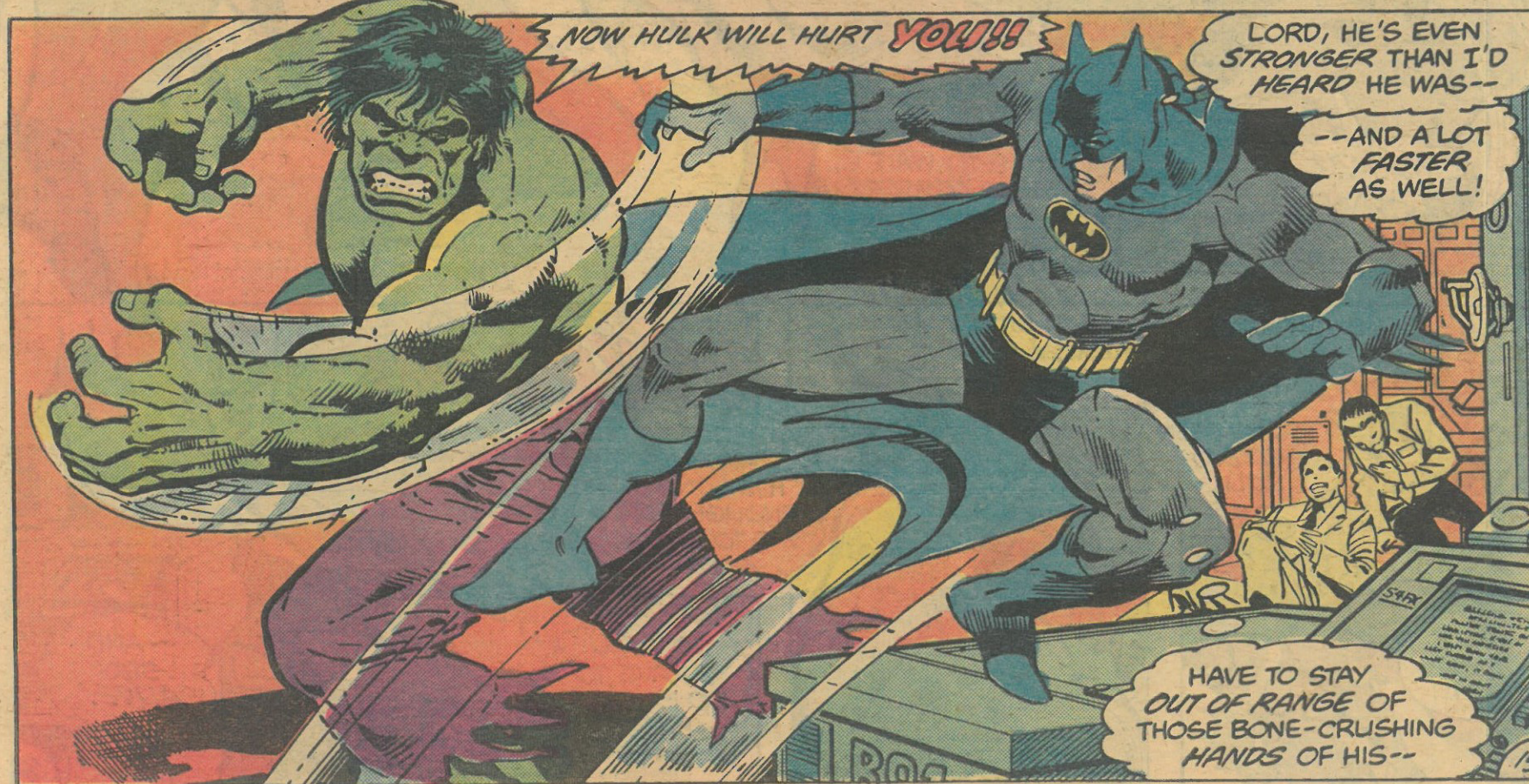
C'MON, YOU BIG GREEN GORILLA-- FALL!

WOK!

WHY IN BLAZES WON'T YOU FALL?

BUT A QUICK GLANCE AT THE MAN-BRUTE'S FURIOUS FACE ATTESTS TO THE FUTILITY OF THE DARK KNIGHT'S EFFORTS...

YOU TRIED TO...HURT HULK...

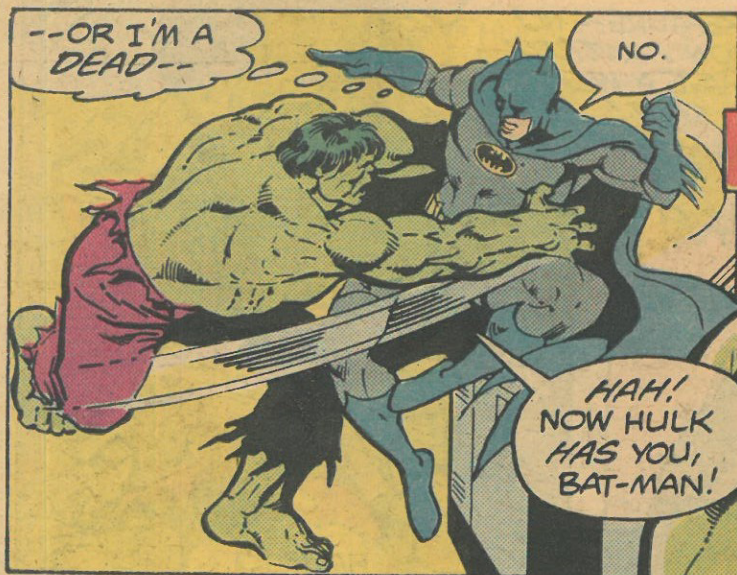


NOW HULK WILL HURT YOU!!

LORD, HE'S EVEN STRONGER THAN I'D HEARD HE WAS--

--AND A LOT FASTER AS WELL!

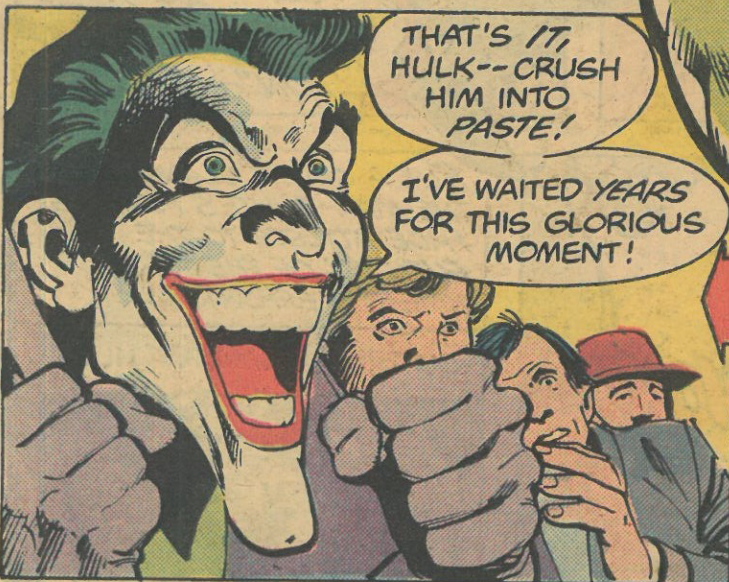
HAVE TO STAY OUT OF RANGE OF THOSE BONE-CRUSHING HANDS OF HIS--



--OR I'M A DEAD--

NO.

HAH!
NOW HULK
HAS YOU,
BAT-MAN!



THAT'S IT,
HULK-- CRUSH
HIM INTO
PASTE!

I'VE WAITED YEARS
FOR THIS GLORIOUS
MOMENT!



THRAK!

WELL, I HATE
TO DISAPPOINT
YOU, JOKER--

HUHN?!

-- BUT YOU'LL
HAVE TO WAIT A
WHILE LONGER!



HULK'S EARS--! WHAT
HAVE YOU DONE TO HULK'S
EARS?!

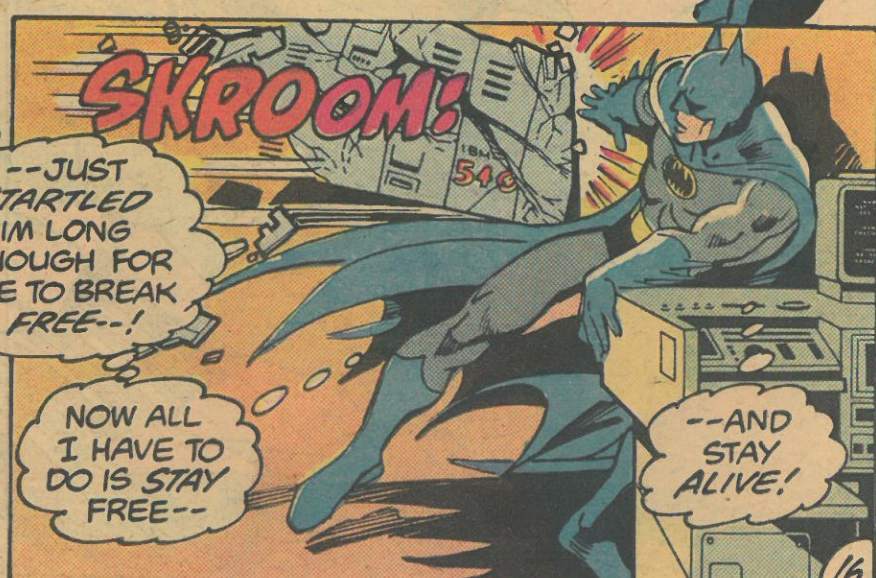
YOU'VE BEEN
A BAD BOY,
HULK--

--SO I
BOXED
THEM!



WHICH DIDN'T
REALLY HURT
THE BRUTE--

540



SKROOM!

--JUST
STARTLED
HIM LONG
ENOUGH FOR
ME TO BREAK
FREE--!

NOW ALL
I HAVE TO
DO IS STAY
FREE--

--AND
STAY
ALIVE!

BUT BEFORE THE MASKED MANHUNTER CAN EVEN MOVE...

NOW, BAT-MAN-- HULK WILL SMASH!!

HE'S GOT ME CORNERED--!

THERE'S NO WAY I'M GOING TO OUT-FIGHT THIS BEHEMOTH--

SO I'LL JUST HAVE TO OUT-THINK HIM!

THIS SLEEPING GAS FROM MY UTILITY BELT CAN FLATTEN A HERD OF ELEPHANTS!

HUH--?!?

LITTLE MAN TRIES TO TRICK HULK WITH PUNY GAS--?!?

CHUFF! CHUFF!

BUT HULK IS TOO SMART FOR BAT-MAN!

GAS CANNOT HURT HULK IF HULK DOES NOT BREATHE IT!

BLAST! MAYBE THERE IS A BRAIN INSIDE THAT THICK GREEN SKULL OF HIS AFTER ALL!

WITH THOSE OVERSIZED LUNGS, THE HULK CAN HOLD HIS BREATH FROM NOW TILL NEXT CHRISTMAS--

HHUUNNFF!!

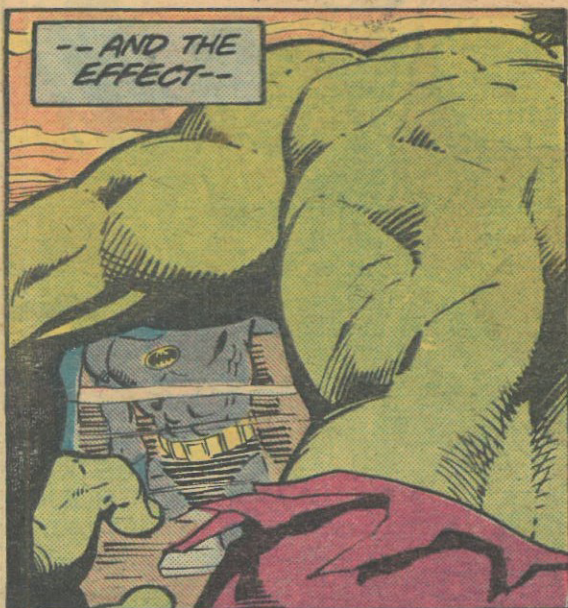
WHUDD!

--UNLESS I CAN TAKE THE WIND OUT OF HIS SAILS--

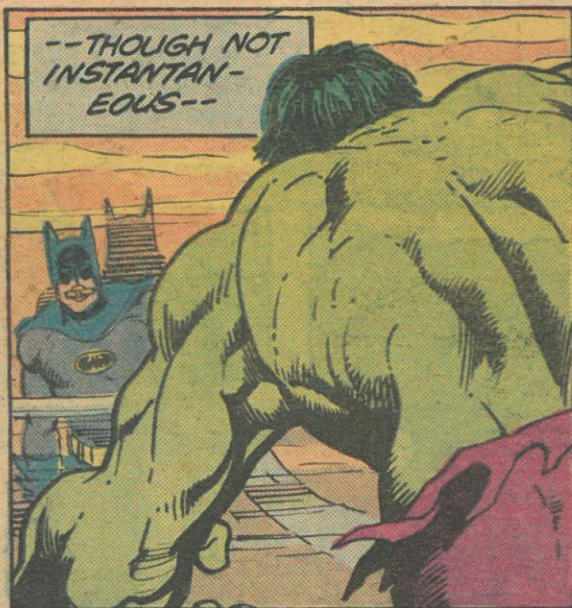
--LIKE THIS!!

THE POWERFUL KICK TO THE MAN-BRUTE'S SOLAR PLEXUS IS MORE STARTLING THAN PAINFUL, BUT IT ACHIEVES THE DESIRED RESULT:

THE BREATH CRUELLY DRIVEN FROM HIS LUNGS, THE HULK REFLEXIVELY SUCKS IN A FRESH CHESTFUL OF AIR--



-- AND THE EFFECT--



--THOUGH NOT INSTANTANEOUS--



--IS NONETHELESS IMPRESSIVE!

SIMPLY PUT, THE GREEN GOLIATH TOPPLES LIKE A POLEAXED REDWOOD!

THAT'S ABOUT AS CLOSE AS I EVER WANT TO CUT IT!



AND AT THAT PRECISE MOMENT...

QUICKLY, BOYS, WHILE THE COAST IS CLEAR--

--EXIT, STAGE RIGHT!

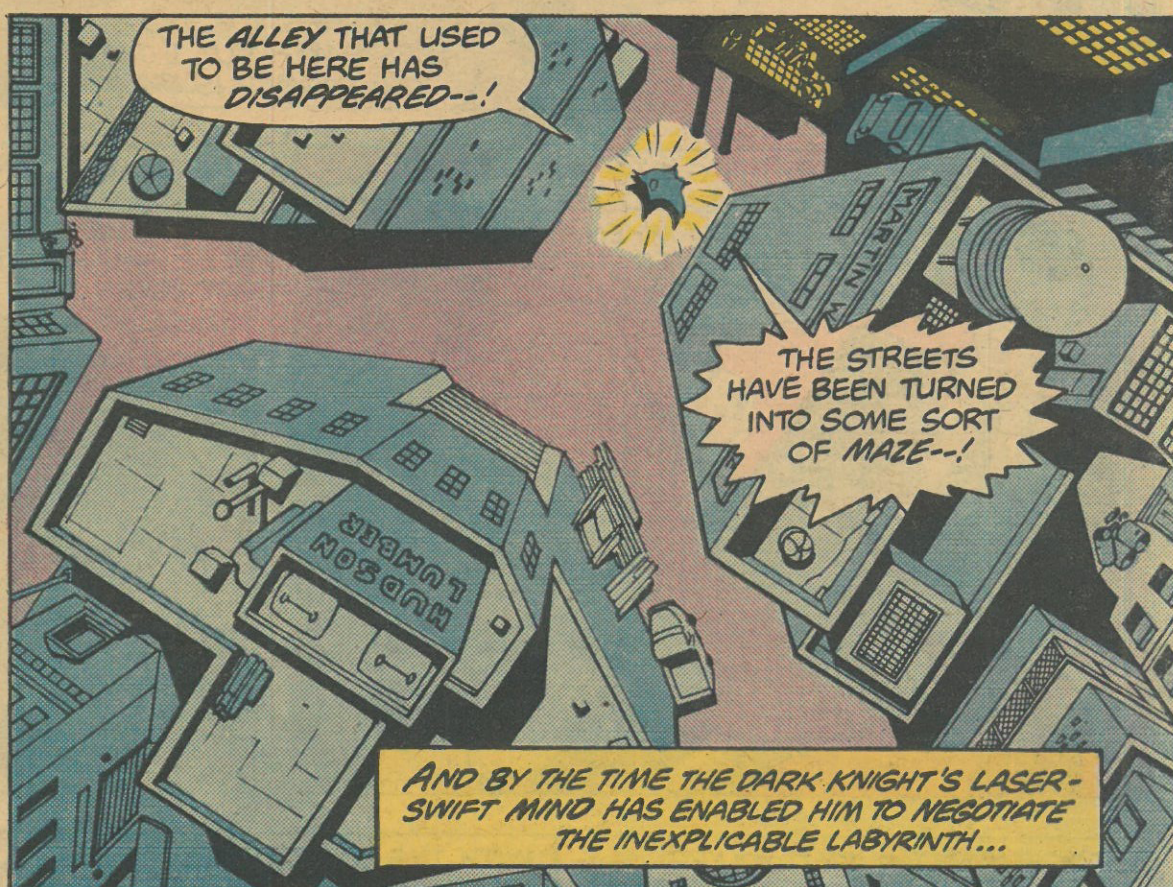
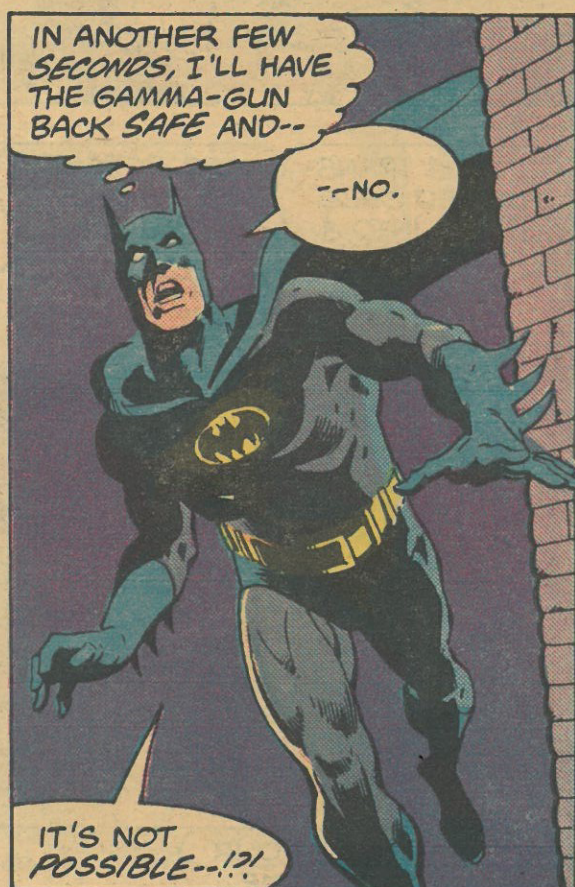
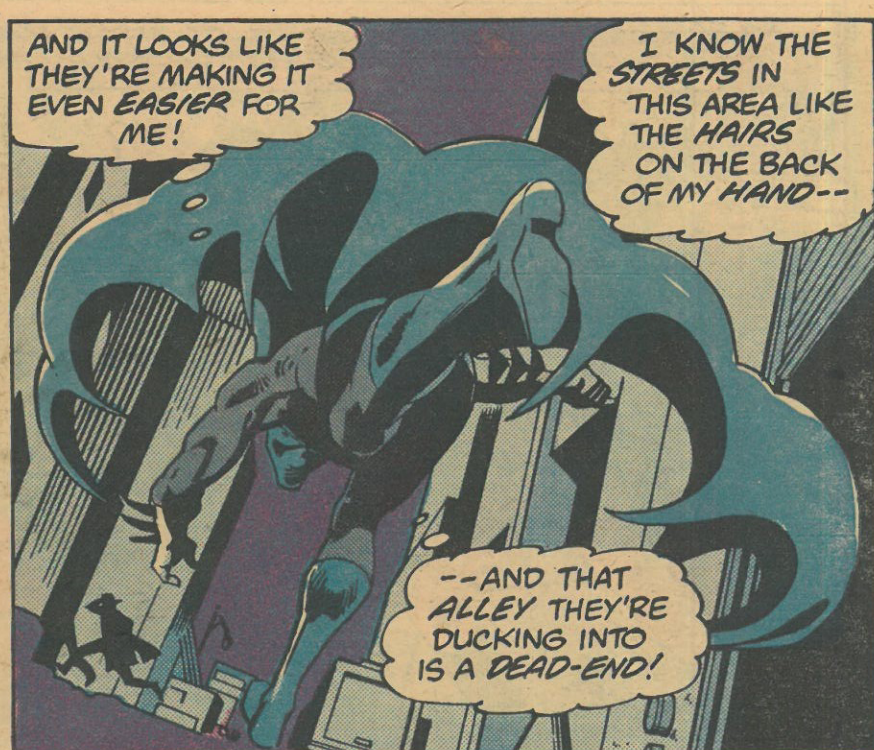
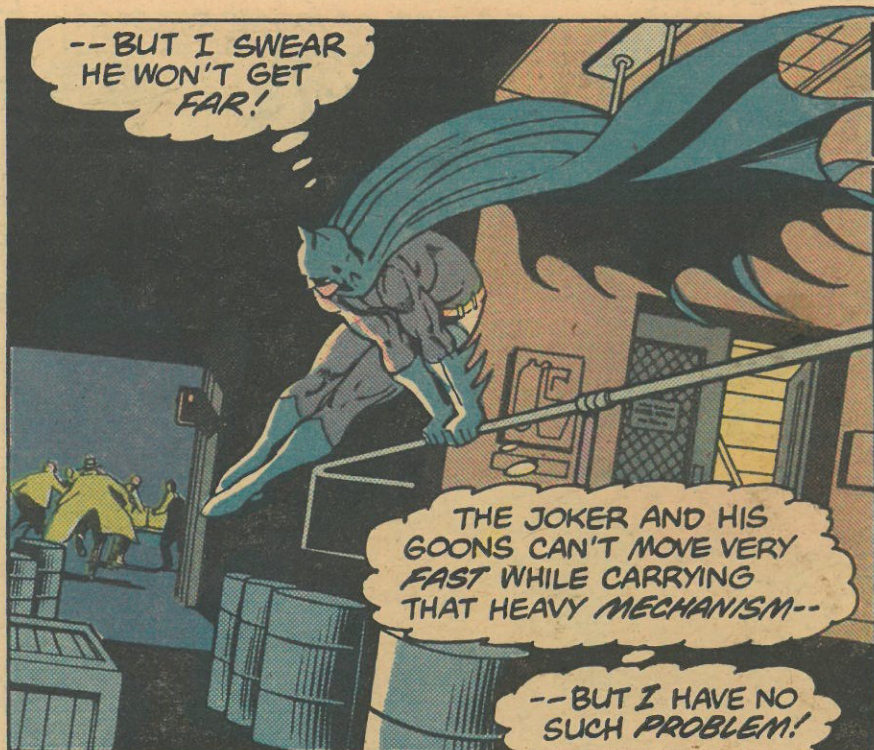
I'D THANK OLD POINTY-EARS FOR PUTTING THE HULK OUT OF OUR MISERY--

--BUT I JUST HATE TO BE A HYPOCRITE!

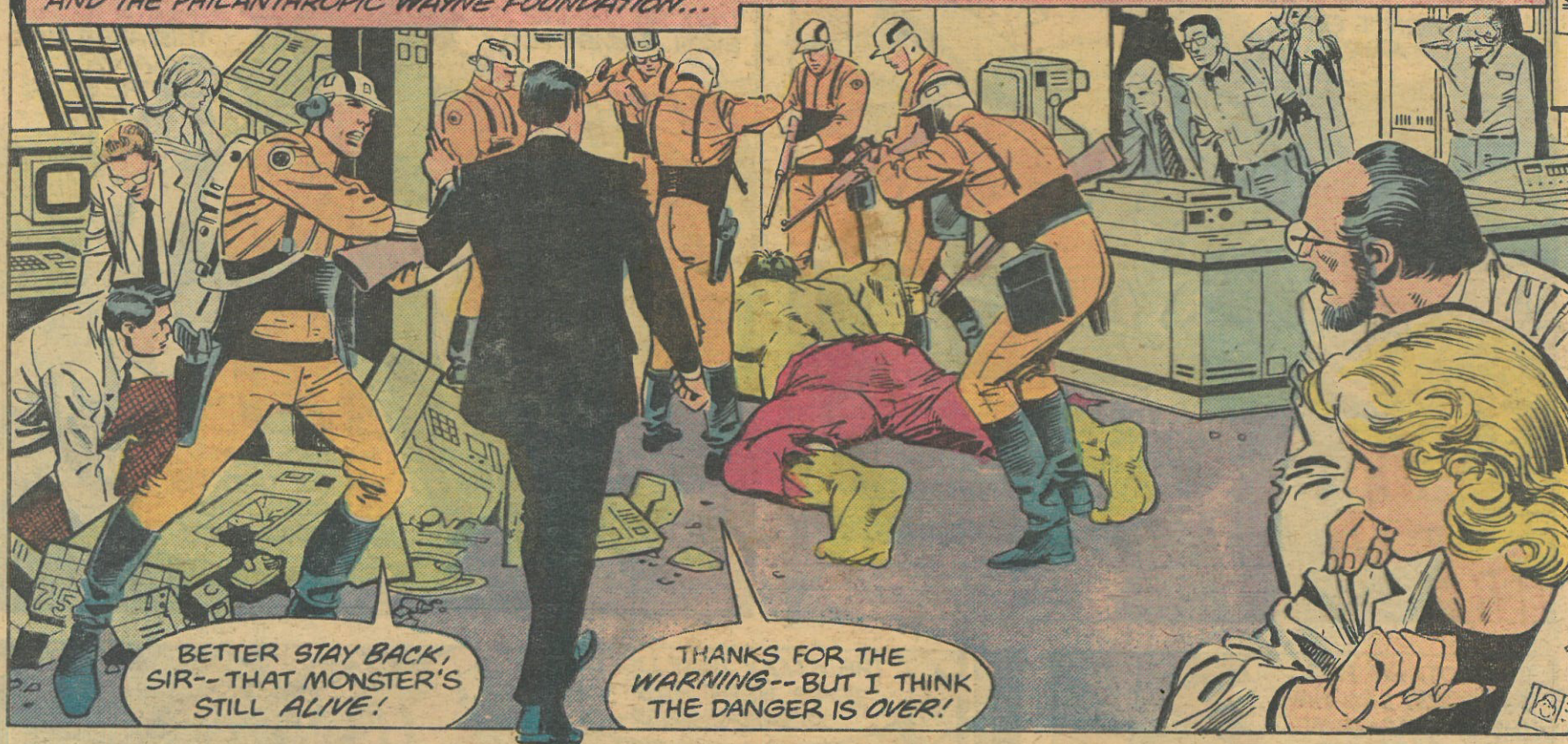


JOKER!

BLAST! THAT MANIAC IS GETTING AWAY WITH THE GAMMA-GUN--



--TO BE REPLACED, MOMENTS LATER, BY BRUCE WAYNE, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF WAYNE RESEARCH AND THE PHILANTHROPIC WAYNE FOUNDATION...



BETTER STAY BACK, SIR-- THAT MONSTER'S STILL ALIVE!

THANKS FOR THE WARNING-- BUT I THINK THE DANGER IS OVER!



FROM EVERYTHING I'VE EVER READ ABOUT THE HULK, HE'S ONLY A MENACE WHEN HE'S THREATENED OR ANGRY--!

WHEN HE REGAINS HIS CALM... WHEN HIS PULSE AND HEART-BEAT BEGIN TO SLOW...

...HE IS TRANSFORMED ONCE MORE INTO A MAN...

...DR. ROBERT BRUCE BANNER, I PRESUME?

S-SORRY ABOUT ALL THE TROUBLE, MR. WAYNE...

I'LL PACK MY GEAR-- AND GET OUT!



NONSENSE! I'M TOLD YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SET OFF THE ALARM THAT SUMMONED THE BATMAN... WHICH PUTS ME IN YOUR DEBT!

NOT REALLY-- I HAD A SELF-ISH INTEREST IN TRYING TO SAVE THAT MACHINE.

THEN I HAVE AN OFFER THAT SHOULD APPEAL TO YOU, BANNER.



WITH THE PROTOTYPE OF THE GAMMA-GUN STOLEN, I'LL NEED SOMEONE TO SUPERVISE CONSTRUCTION OF ITS REPLACEMENT--

--AND I CAN'T THINK OF ANYONE MORE QUALIFIED THAN YOU!

ME? AFTER ALL THIS? BUT WHY--?

I PREFER TO ONLY HIRE THE BEST.



I APPRECIATE YOUR CONFIDENCE IN ME, MR. WAYNE...

...BUT WHAT ABOUT THE HULK?

DON'T WORRY, MY FRIEND...

...THERE ARE WAYS OF DEALING WITH HIM!

CHAPTER TWO: "WHEN DREAMS WON'T COME!"

IT IS QUIET ALONG THESE MOON-LIT DOCKS TONIGHT, SAVE FOR THE PERSISTENT LAPPING OF THE RELENTLESS TIDE AGAINST THE MILDEWED PILINGS--

--AND THE UNSETTLING ECHO OF LAUGHTER HANGING HEAVY IN THE AIR--

--MAD, TRIUMPHANT LAUGHTER!

SEE? DIDN'T I TELL YOU I ALWAYS DELIVER?

HAHAHA



IN ANOTHER FEW SECONDS, MY BOYS WILL HAVE YOUR GAMMA-GIZMO PURRING LIKE A PUSSYCAT...



...SO YOU AND I CAN COMPLETE OUR LITTLE-- AH--BUSINESS ARRANGEMENT!

NO! NOT UNTIL I AM WELL ONCE MORE!



IT'S ALL SET, BOSS!

SPLENDID, ORVILLE!

YOU WANT WELL, MY FRIEND-- YOU'VE GOT IT!

THIS LITTLE BABY IS GUARANTEED TO CURE EVERYTHING FROM BUNIONS TO THE BUBONIC PLAGUE--!

JUST AS SOON AS YOU-- AH-- TELL ME HOW TO TURN IT ON!



AND, AFTER SOME RATHER HURRIED, ALMOST-FRANTIC INSTRUCTION...

OKAY, I THINK I'VE GOT IT...

I FOCUS THIS FIELD-INHIBITOR...

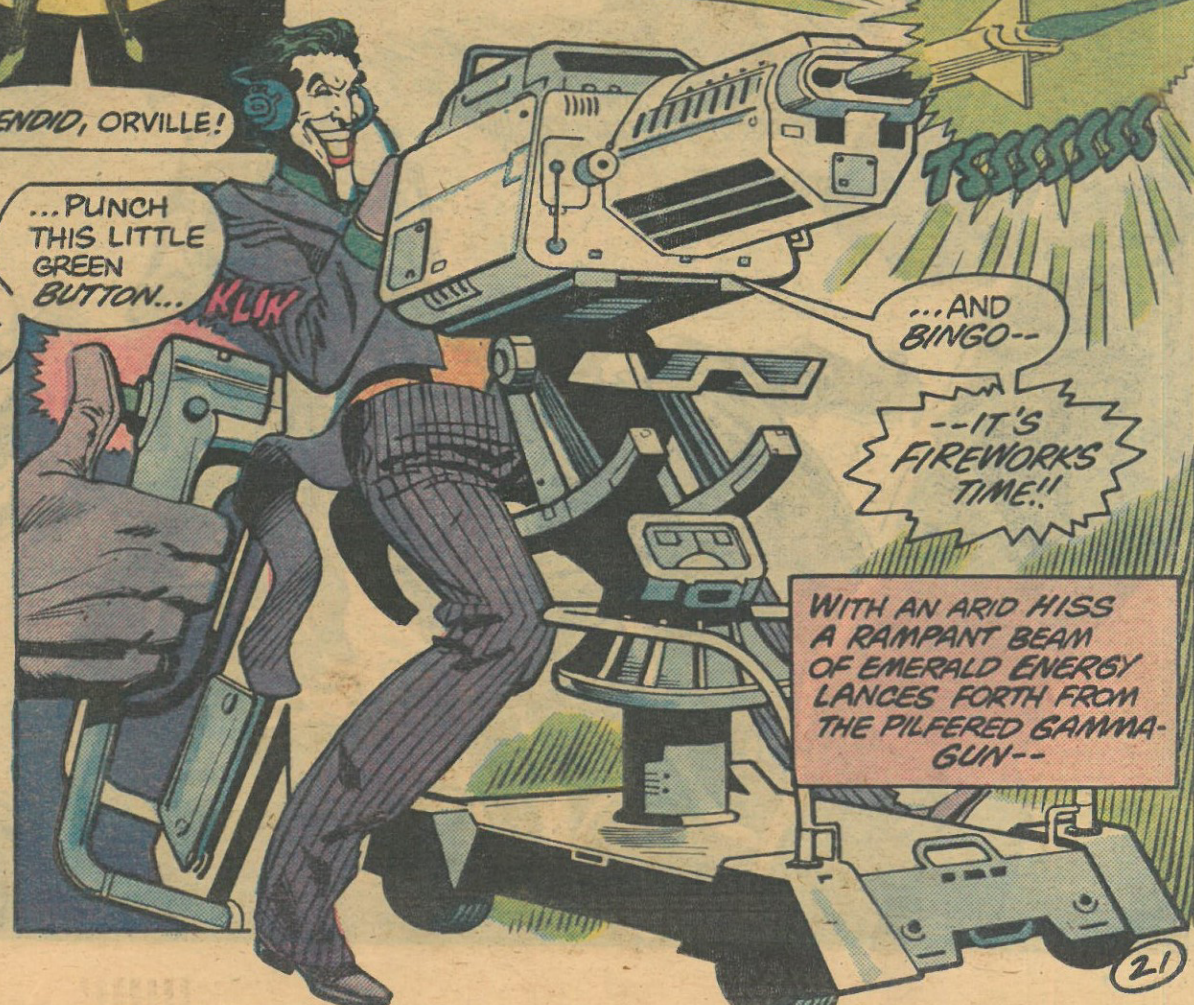
...ADJUST THESE POWER-BOOSTERS...

...PUNCH THIS LITTLE GREEN BUTTON...

KLIK

...AND BINGO--

--IT'S FIREWORKS TIME!!



WITH AN ARID HISS A RAMPANT BEAM OF EMERALD ENERGY LANCES FORTH FROM THE PILFERED GAMMA-GUN--



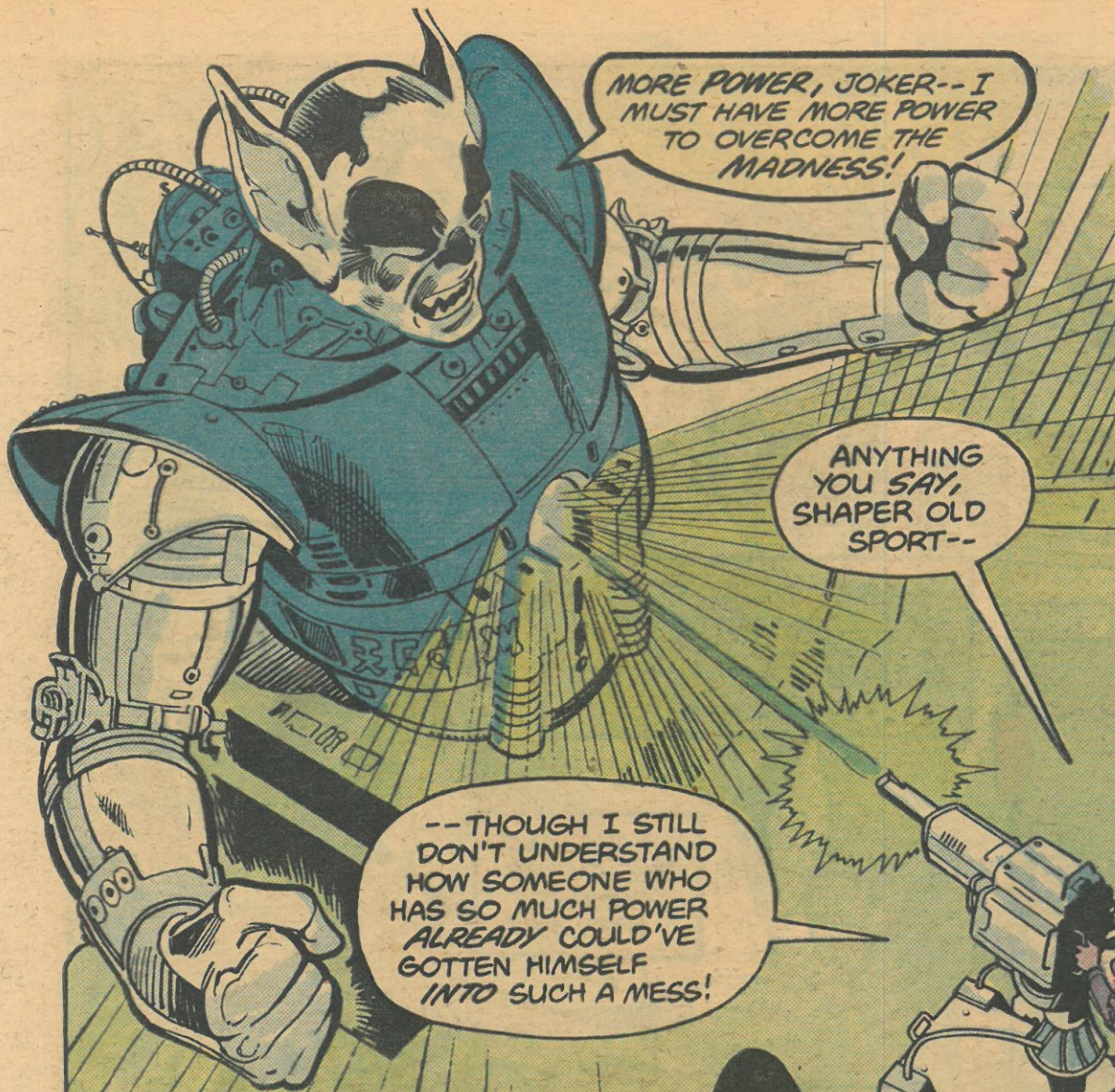
--ENVELOPING THE MONSTROUS, PALE-SKINNED FIGURE WHOSE BULK FAIRLY SEEMS TO FILL THE LIMELIT WAREHOUSE.

FROM THE WAIST UP, THE ALIEN BEHEMOTH SEEMS SOMEWHAT LIKE A MAN; FROM THE WAIST DOWN, HE APPEARS A MACHINE. IN TRUTH, HE IS BOTH OF THESE THINGS--AND, IN TRUTH, HE IS NEITHER!

WHAT HE ACTUALLY IS IS POWER, POWER FAR BEYOND MAN'S MEAGER ABILITY TO IMAGINE SUCH THINGS --WHICH IS, IN ITS WAY, MOST IRONIC!

FOR THOUGH HE IS KNOWN BY MYRIAD DIFFERENT NAMES THROUGHOUT THE LIMITLESS COSMOS, THE NAME HE MOST FAVORS IS...

...THE SHAPER OF WORLDS, HE WHO MAKES DREAMS LIVE!



MORE POWER, JOKER-- I MUST HAVE MORE POWER TO OVERCOME THE MADNESS!

ANYTHING YOU SAY, SHAPER OLD SPORT--

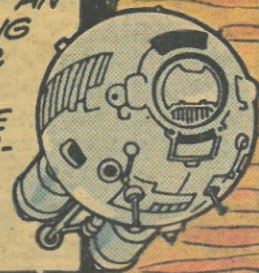
--THOUGH I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW SOMEONE WHO HAS SO MUCH POWER ALREADY COULD'VE GOTTEN HIMSELF INTO SUCH A MESS!



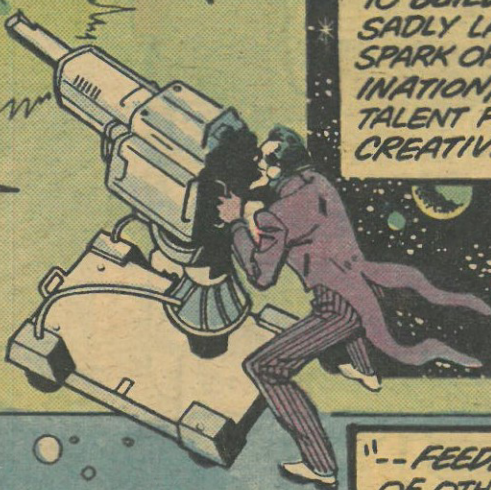
EACH OF US, JOKER-- NO MATTER HOW POWERFUL-- IS UTTERLY HELPLESS BEFORE THE WHIMS OF A CAPRICIOUS FATE!

TAKE MYSELF, FOR EXAMPLE...

"POSSESSED OF AN ALL-CONSUMING URGE TO MOLD, TO BUILD-- I SADLY LACK THE SPARK OF IMAGINATION, THE TALENT FOR CREATIVITY..."



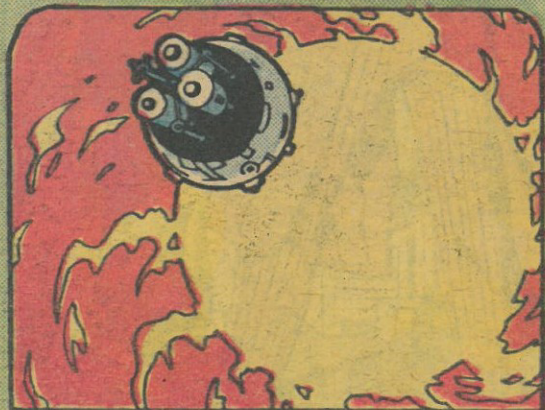
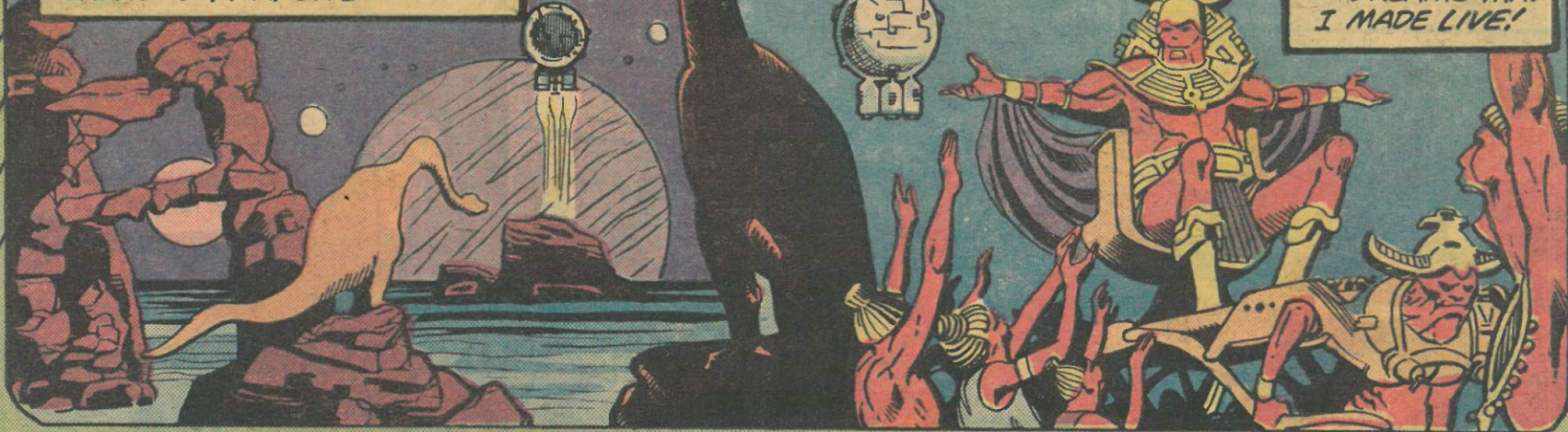
"I AM DENIED THE GIFT OF DREAMS!"



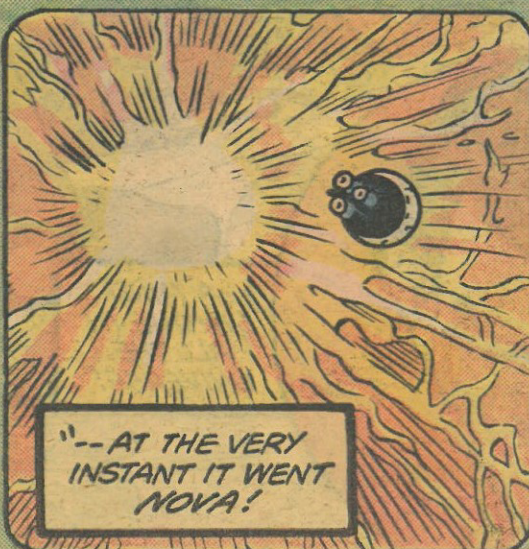
"THUS, I HAVE WANDERED THE UNIVERSE FOR YEARS BEYOND NUMBERING, BECOMING A GALACTIC PARASITE--"

"--FEEDING OFF THE DREAMS OF OTHER, LESSER BEINGS--"

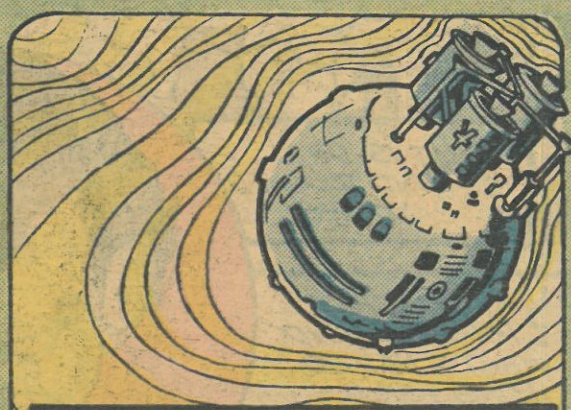
"--DREAMS THAT I MADE LIVE!"



"I MIGHT HAVE GONE ON FOREVER THAT WAY, HAD I NOT THE MISFORTUNE TO BE PASSING A NAMELESS ROGUE STAR--"



"--AT THE VERY INSTANT IT WENT NOVA!"



"RIPPLING WAVES OF HEAT AND RADIATION BUFFETED MY HAPLESS SPACECRAFT--"

"--AND SENT AGONIZING NEEDLES OF UNKNOWN ENERGY SLASHING THROUGH MY BODY!"

"THOUGH NO PERMANENT PHYSICAL DAMAGE WAS DONE ME, THOSE EXTRAORDINARY ENERGIES NONETHELESS HAD THEIR EFFECT--"

"--FOR I SOON FOUND MYSELF LOSING THE ABILITY TO ABSORB THE DREAMS OF OTHERS--"

"--AND WITHOUT THAT NECESSARY OUTLET FOR MY SURGING SHAPING POWERS, I KNEW I WOULD SOON GO MAD--"

"--AYE, AND THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE WITH ME!"

"SEEKING A CURE ULTIMATELY LED ME HERE TO EARTH, WHERE MY WANDERING HAD BROUGHT ME A TIME OR TWO BEFORE..."

"I MANIFESTED THIS WAREHOUSE TO CONCEAL MY STAR-SPANNING CRAFT--"

"--AND THEN I SENT MY MIND QUESTING IN SEARCH OF HELP..."

"BUT THE MINDS I TOUCHED WERE USELESS TO ME, DREAMING SMALL UNIMPORTANT DREAMS--"

"THAT IS WHY I SUMMONED YOU TO ME, JOKER--"

"--AND WHY WE STRUCK OUR BARGAIN!"

SHAPER, OLD SON, IT WILL BE A PLEASURE DOING BUSINESS WITH YOU...

...WON'T IT, BOYS?

"THAT IS, UNTIL MY MIND TOUCHED YOURS!"

"IN YOU, JOKER, I FINALLY FOUND WHAT I HAD SO LONG BEEN SEARCHING FOR--"

--A MIND UNIQUE IN ALL THE UNIVERSE!"

AND I'VE FULFILLED MY PART OF THE BARGAIN, SHAPER-- I'VE BROUGHT YOU THE GIZMO YOU THINK WILL CURE YOU!

NOW WHEN WILL YOU START FULFILLING YOUR PART?

WHEN THE CURE IS COMPLETE, JOKER-- AND I AM ONCE MORE WHOLE!

THE SOONER THE BETTER, BIG GUY.

I DO HAVE OTHER--AH-- WORLDS TO CONQUER, SO TO SPEAK.

I STILL DON'T GET IT, BOSS-- WHY ARE YOU HELPIN' THAT SPACE FREAK?

YOURS IS NOT TO REASON WHY, ORVILLE-- BUT I WOULD THINK THE ANSWER IS OBVIOUS!

BOYS, WHO IS THE CRAZIEST MAN ON EARTH?

WHY, UH-- YOU ARE BOSS... HANDS DOWN!

PRECISELY-- AND I INTEND TO KEEP IT THAT WAY!

IF THE SHAPER FINALLY POPS HIS CORK, EVERYONE IN THE UNIVERSE WILL BE AS CRAZY AS I AM...

AND WE CAN'T HAVE THAT NOW, CAN WE? NO, WE CAN'T HAVE THAT AT ALL!

IN THE VALLEY OF THE SANE, IT'S THE INSANE MAN WHO'S KING!

SAY WHAT?

THE GAMMA-GUN, JOKER-- TURN IT OFF! IT'S FAILED-- FAILED MISERABLY!

I AM STILL LOSING MY DREAM-ABSORBING POWERS... STILL LOSING MY MIND!

GEE, WHAT'RE WE SUPPOSED TO DO NOW, BOSS?

I WAS RATHER HOPING YOU WOULDN'T ASK ME THAT, ELMO.

BUT ALREADY THE LITTLE TWISTED WHEELS IN THE CRIME CLOWN'S MIND ARE TURNING... TURNING...

CHAPTER THREE: WHEN THE SEA CHURNS GREEN...!

ANCHORED JUST BEYOND THE THREE-MILE MARK OFF THE SHORES OF GOTHAM CITY, THIS SUPER-TANKER WAS ONCE THE FLAGSHIP OF THE WAYNE ENTERPRISES LINE--

--BUT TODAY, IT SERVES ANOTHER, MORE INTRICATE PURPOSE!

FOR, ITS SPRAWLING INTERIOR HAS BEEN TRANSFORMED INTO A COMPLEX OF SOPHISTICATED LABORATORIES--

--INCLUDING THIS ONE CURRENTLY DIRECTED BY THE DEDICATED DR. ROBERT BRUCE BANNER...

AND TRIPLE-CHECKED IT, DOCTOR.

HAVE YOU DOUBLE-CHECKED THAT ENERGY-CONVERTER?

73S-X1
73S-X2
EXX

THERE ISN'T A SPECK OF DUST IN THIS LAB THAT HASN'T BEEN TESTED, RE-TESTED, THEN TESTED AGAIN TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT--

--OH LORD.

YOU CLUMSY OAF! DON'T YOU REALIZE WHAT THIS PROJECT MEANS TO ME?

IF YOU'VE DAMAGED THAT ENERGY-CONVERTOR, WE'RE FINISHED!

I-I'M SORRY, DR. BANNER--!

SORRY? WHY, I COULD... COULD...

NO! WHAT AM I DOING--?

MUSTN'T LOSE CONTROL OF MYSELF LIKE THAT!

--BUT MERCIFULLY BRIEF!

F-FORGIVE ME, JACKSON-- I'M AFRAID THE PRESSURE HAS BEEN GETTING TO ME.

THAT'S OKAY, DOCTOR--WE'RE ALL A LITTLE TENSE.

CHAK

WHAT--?!

CAN'T RISK TRIGGERING THE CHANGE AGAIN-- NOT HERE-- NOT NOW!

HAVE... TO... KEEP... CALM...

THE BATTLE BRUCE BANNER WAGES WITH THE BEAST WHO DWELLS WITHIN HIM IS BRUTAL--

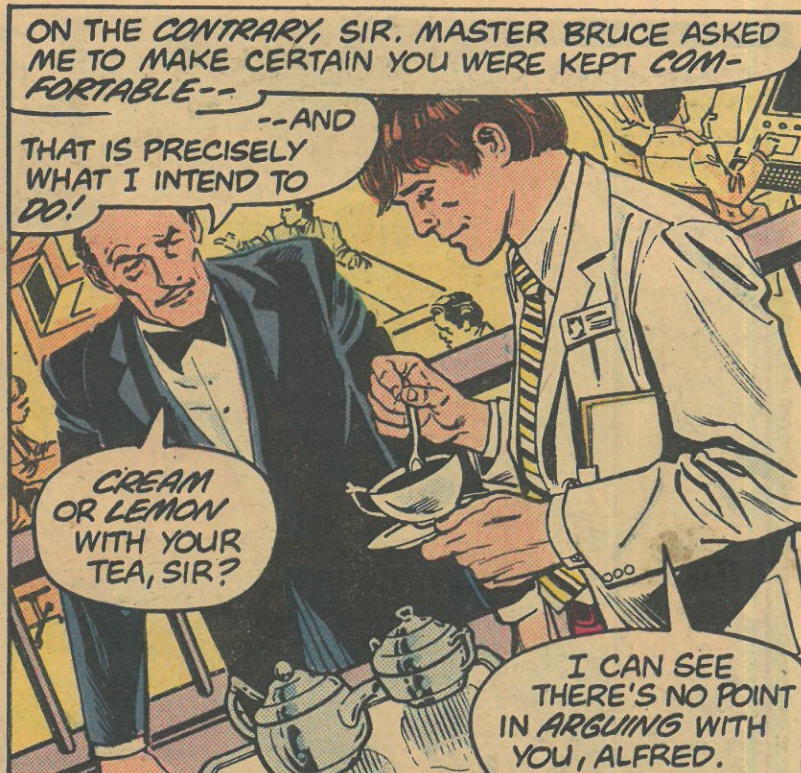
AND A LITTLE AFRAID... OF YOU.



PERHAPS A SPOT OF TEA WILL CALM YOUR NERVES, DR. BANNER.

WHO--?! OH-- IT'S YOU!

YOU KNOW, YOU REALLY DON'T HAVE TO PLAY NURSEMAID FOR ME, ALFRED!



ON THE CONTRARY, SIR. MASTER BRUCE ASKED ME TO MAKE CERTAIN YOU WERE KEPT COM-FORTABLE--

--AND THAT IS PRECISELY WHAT I INTEND TO DO!

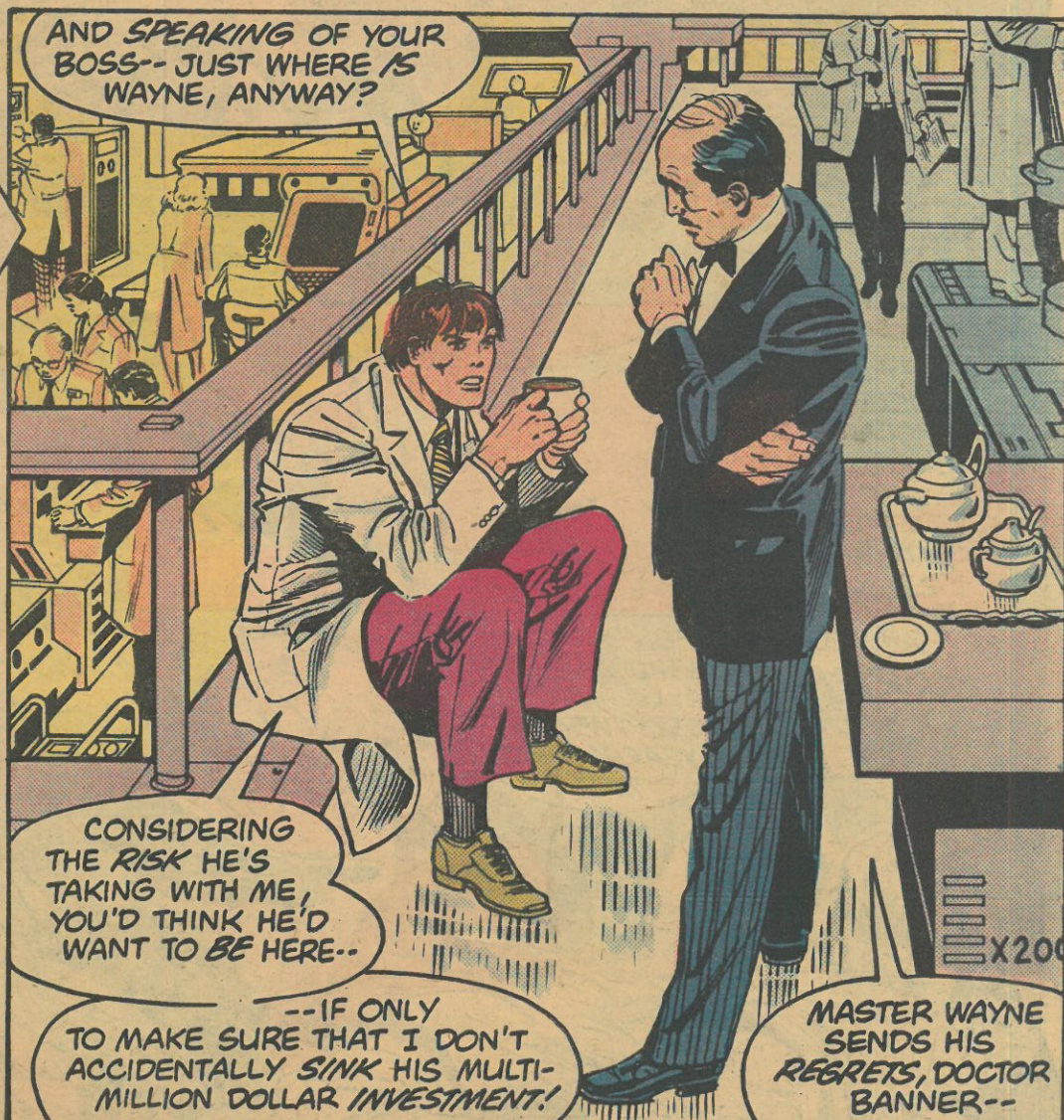
CREAM OR LEMON WITH YOUR TEA, SIR?

I CAN SEE THERE'S NO POINT IN ARGUING WITH YOU, ALFRED.



I SINCERELY HOPE NOT, SIR!

--ESPECIALLY WHEN ONE CONSIDERS WHAT IS APT TO HAPPEN TO YOU WHEN YOU LOSE YOUR TEMPER.

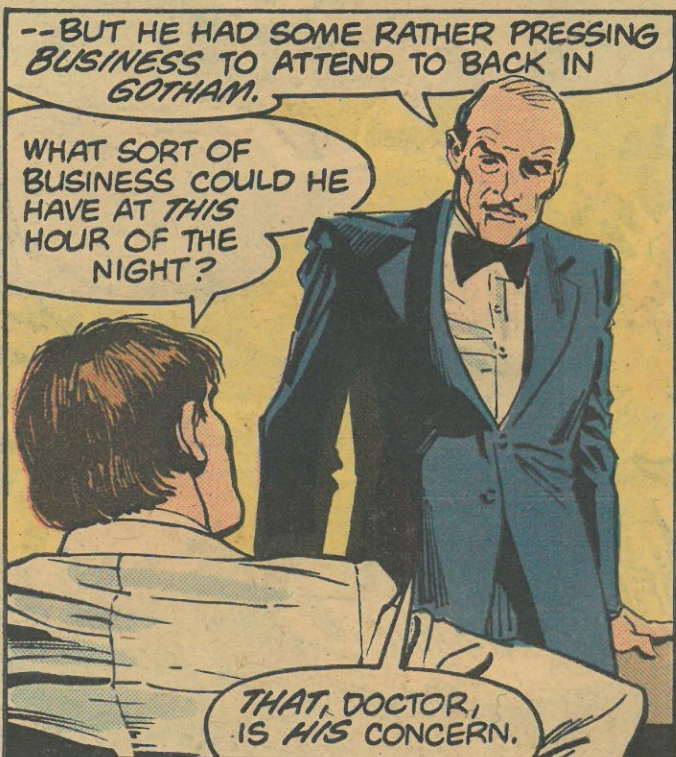


AND SPEAKING OF YOUR BOSS-- JUST WHERE IS WAYNE, ANYWAY?

CONSIDERING THE RISK HE'S TAKING WITH ME, YOU'D THINK HE'D WANT TO BE HERE--

--IF ONLY TO MAKE SURE THAT I DON'T ACCIDENTALLY SINK HIS MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR INVESTMENT!

MASTER WAYNE SENDS HIS REGRETS, DOCTOR BANNER--



--BUT HE HAD SOME RATHER PRESSING BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO BACK IN GOTHAM.

WHAT SORT OF BUSINESS COULD HE HAVE AT THIS HOUR OF THE NIGHT?

THAT, DOCTOR, IS HIS CONCERN.



TO ANSWER BRUCE BANNER'S CURIOUS QUESTION, WE MUST TURN OUR ATTENTION BACK TO THE CONCRETE CANYONWAYS OF GOTHAM--

--WHERE BRUCE WAYNE IS "ATTENDING TO BUSINESS" AS ONLY THE BATMAN CAN!

STOGIE, I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU!

CRIPES! I TOL' YA WE WOULDN'T GET AWAY WIT' IT!

SHUT UP, SIDNEY!

YOU AIN'T GONNA PIN THAT HARDWARE STORE HEIST ON US, MASKED MAN!

YOU AIN'T GONNA LIVE THAT LONG!

KRAK!

BY NOW, STOGIE-- YOU SHOULD KNOW BETTER THAN THAT!

UUNNNHH!!

SIDNEY, YOU'VE JUST RUN OUT OF TIME--

--HARD, SOFT, OR OTHERWISE!

HIT 'IM, FELLAS--
HARD!

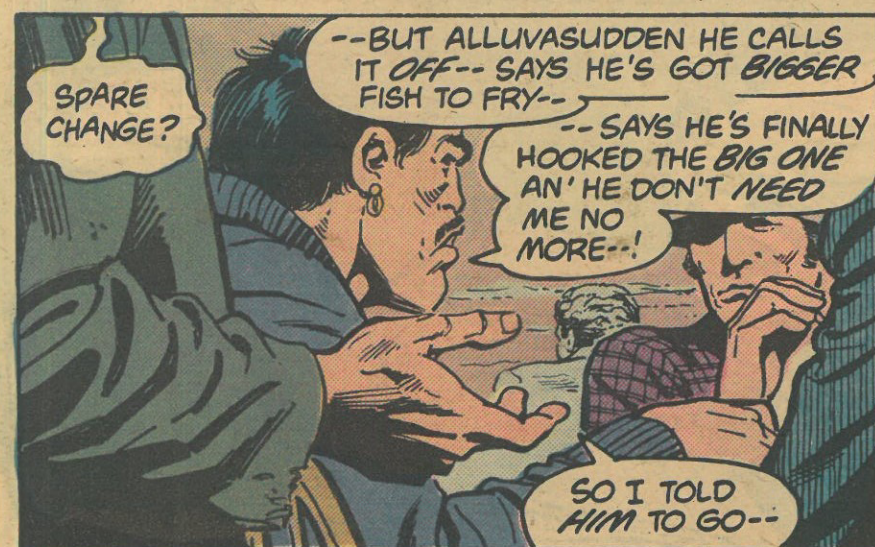
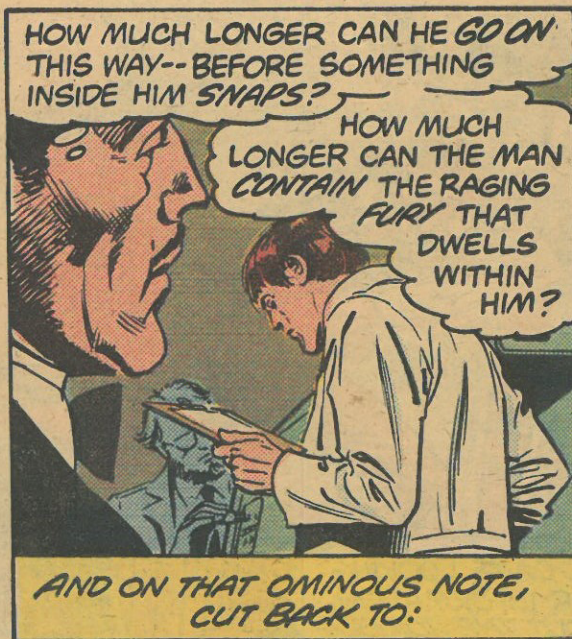
HE PINS THAT HARDWARE JOB ON US--AN' WE ALL DO TWENTY YEARS' HARD TIME!

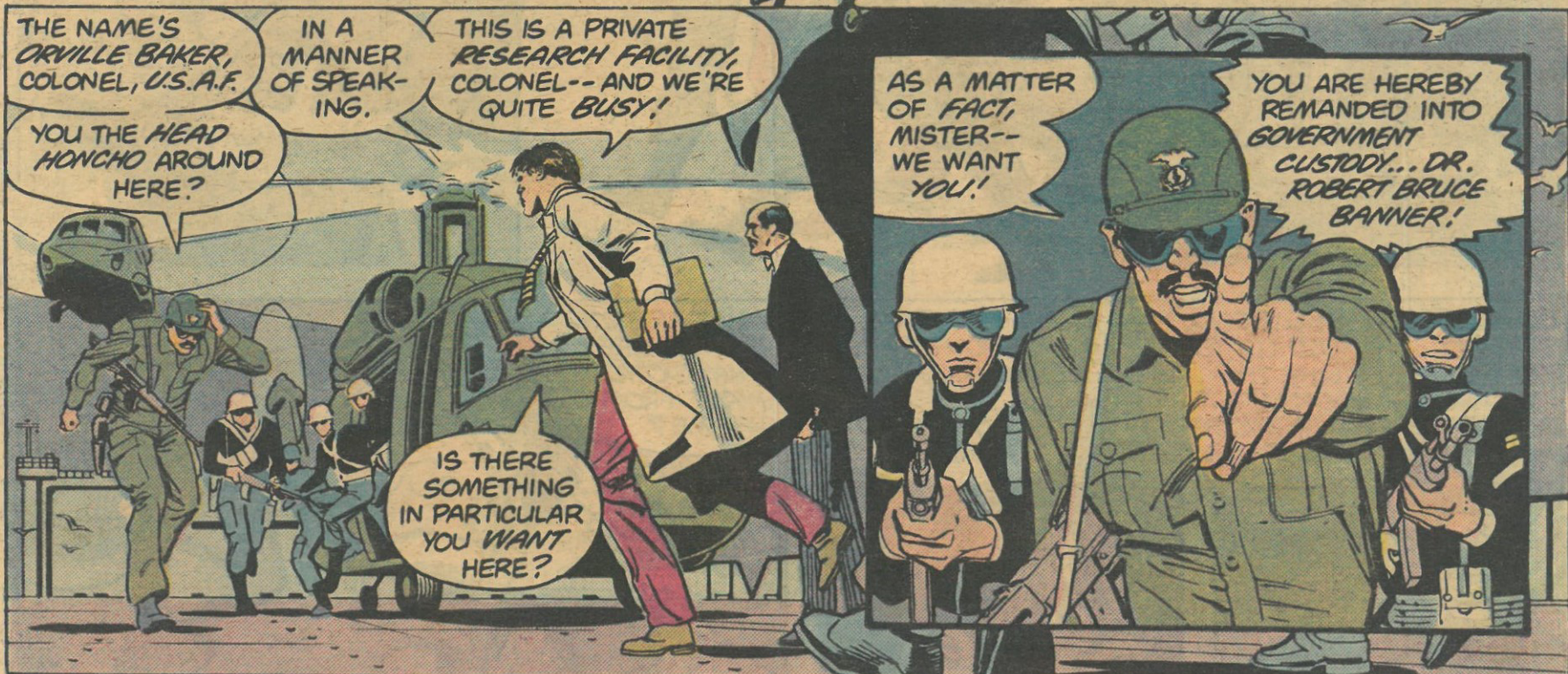
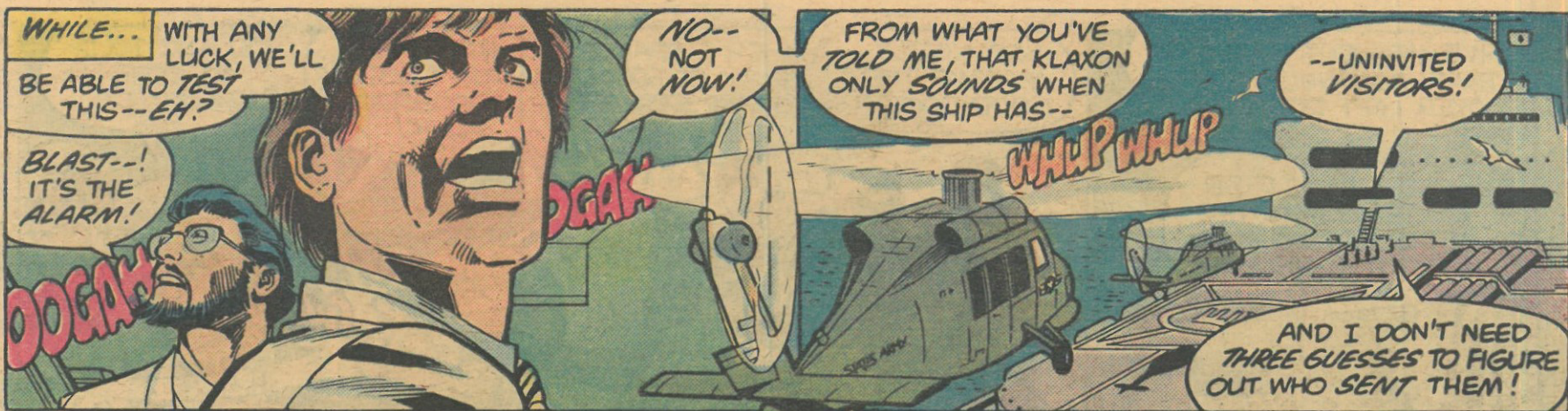
UURRRK!!

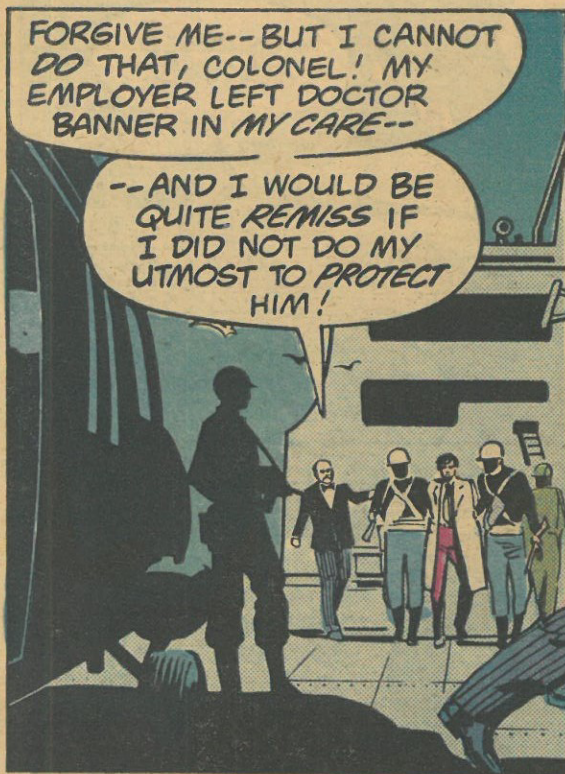
CHOK!

HHUUNNF









FORGIVE ME-- BUT I CANNOT DO THAT, COLONEL! MY EMPLOYER LEFT DOCTOR BANNER IN MY CARE--

--AND I WOULD BE QUITE REMISS IF I DID NOT DO MY UTMOST TO PROTECT HIM!



NOW KINDLY UNHAND THE GOOD DOCTOR--

--OR I FEAR I SHALL BE FORCED TO TAKE STERNER MEASURES!



MAYBE YOU DON'T LISTEN TOO GOOD, PUNK!

YOU WUZ TOLD TO STOP BOTHERIN' US!

SWOK!

UUNHH!



YOU MORON! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?

THE BOSS TOLD US TO MAKE THIS LOOK LIKE A PROPER MILITARY OPERATION!

HUH--?!!



YOU'RE NOT REAL ARMY! YOU'RE ALL A BUNCH OF FRAUDS!

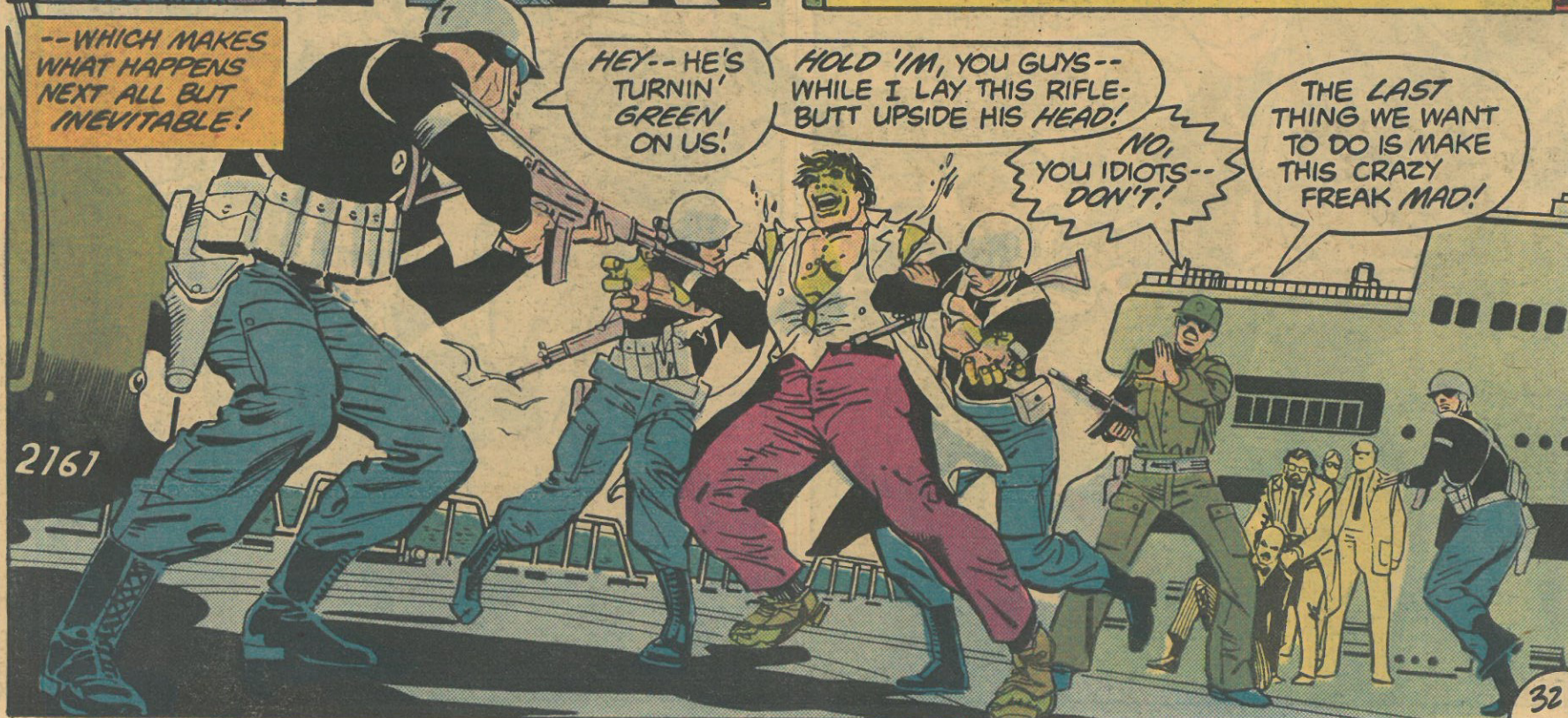
WHO ARE YOU REALLY?



WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?

TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT!!

SUDDENLY, UNREASONING FEAR WELLS UP IN BANNER'S BODY, STARTING HIS HEART RACING, HIS PULSE POUNDING--



--WHICH MAKES WHAT HAPPENS NEXT ALL BUT INEVITABLE!

HEY-- HE'S TURNIN' GREEN ON US!

HOLD 'IM, YOU GUYS-- WHILE I LAY THIS RIFLE-BUTT UPSIDE HIS HEAD!

NO, YOU IDIOTS-- DON'T!

THE LAST THING WE WANT TO DO IS MAKE THIS CRAZY FREAK MAD!



MAD!? YES, MAD AT PUNY HUMANS WHO ALWAYS TRY TO HURT HULK!
HULK IS MAD!!

MAD AT WORLD THAT WILL NOT LEAVE HULK ALONE!

AND THUS, THE SEEMINGLY-ETERNAL BATTLE IS JOINED ONCE MORE--

--THOUGH IT IS A DECIDEDLY ONE-SIDED BATTLE AT BEST!

C'MON, YOU GUYS-- WE GOTTA BRING THIS MONSTER DOWN!

BAH! LITTLE MEN ARE LIKE ANTS--ALWAYS ANNOYING HULK-- MAKING HULK ITCH--!

STOP BOTHERING HULK, LITTLE MEN--OR HULK WILL SQUASH YOU LIKE THE BUGS YOU ARE!

JUST KEEP HIM BUSY A FEW SECONDS LONGER, BOYS-- I GOT THE TASER-RIFLE!

THE ELECTRICAL CHARGE IN THIS BABY COULD BRING DOWN KING KONG--

--SO IT SHOULD HAVE NO TROUBLE AT ALL WITH A CERTAIN GREEN GORILLA!

SWIFTLY, THE REMARKABLE WEAPON IS FIRED, UNREELING TWO SMALL SUCTION-CLAWS--

CHUFF!

--WHICH AUTOMATICALLY ADHERE TO THE EMERALD MAN-BRUTE'S MASSIVE CHEST--

HUHN?

AARRGGHH!

--AND INSTANTLY UNLEASH 25,000 SIZZLING VOLTS OF PURE ELECTRICITY--

--MORE THAN ENOUGH POWER TO STUN ANY NORMAL CREATURE INTO HELPLESS SUBMISSION--

--BUT, UNFORTUNATELY, AS HAS BEEN PREVIOUSLY STATED, THE INCREDIBLE HULK IS ANYTHING BUT NORMAL!

WHY, LITTLE MEN? WHY DO YOU ALWAYS TRY TO DESTROY HULK WITH YOUR PUNY GUNS AND MACHINES?

HULK NEVER WANTS TO FIGHT YOU! HULK ONLY WANTS TO BE LEFT IN PEACE!

AAHHH!!!

BUT IF IT IS WAR THAT LITTLE MEN WANT--

--THEN WAR IS WHAT HULK WILL GIVE YOU!

H-HE THREW ME ACROSS THE DECK LIKE--LIKE I WAS JUST SOME KIND OF PAPER DOLL--!

SKRAK

LORD, IF THE TASER-GUN COULDN'T BEAT THAT MONSTER--WHAT WILL?

IT WOULD TAKE A BIGGER MONSTER, THAT'S WHAT-- SOMETHING TOUGHER, MORE POWERFUL-- SOMETHING THOSE OVERSIZED FISTS COULDN'T SMASH!

YEAH, RIGHT--AND WHILE I'M AT IT, WHY DON'T I TRY WHISTLING UP THE TOOTH FAIRY?



HULK IS TIRED OF WARNING PUNY HUMANS TO STAY AWAY FROM HULK!

NOW HULK WILL SIMPLY SMASH YOU LIKE--

NO-- WHERE DID THAT THING COME FROM?

--HUH?



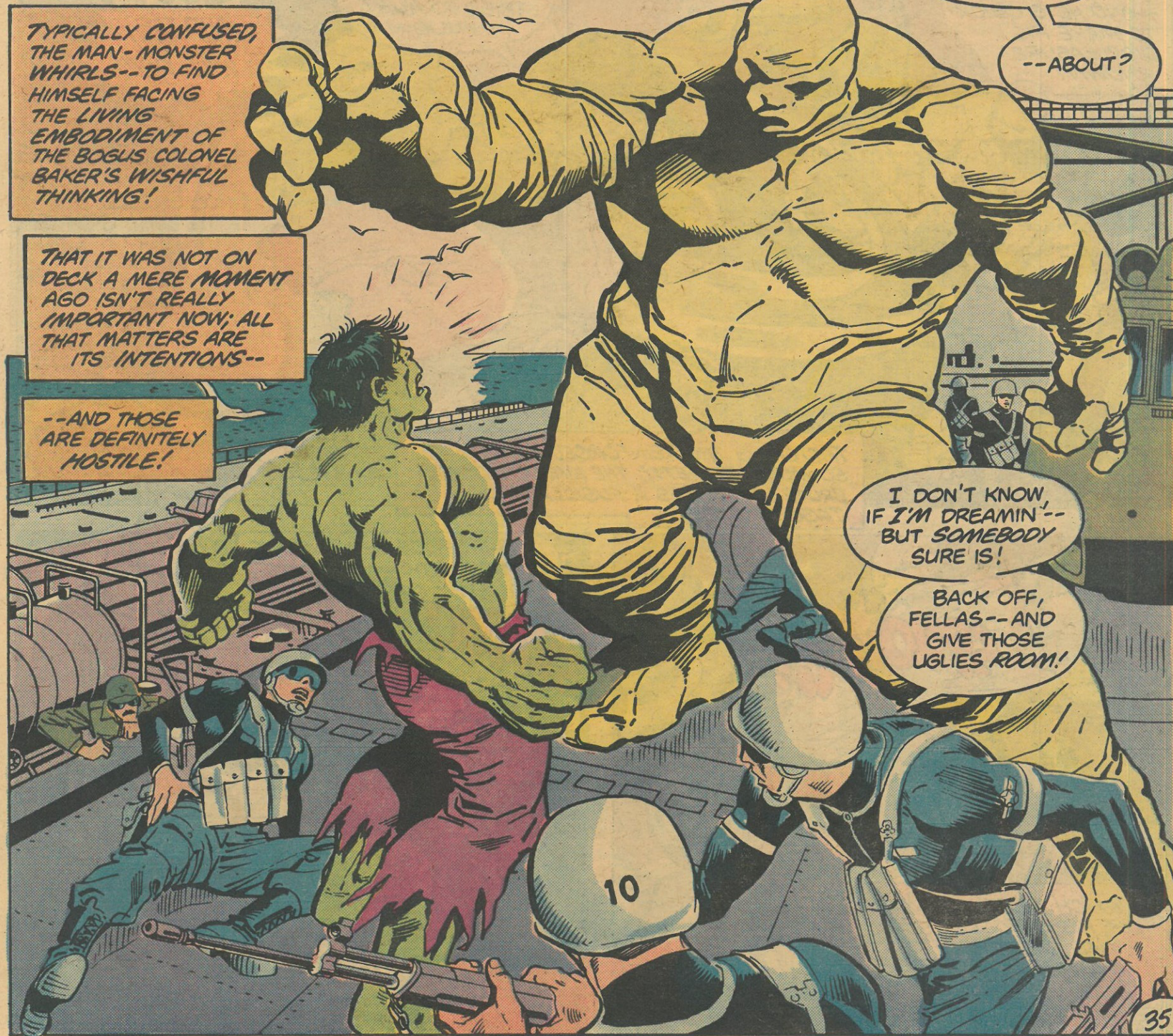
THAT CUTS IT-- I QUIT! FIGHTING THE HULK IS BAD ENOUGH--

--BUT THE BOSS NEVER TOLD US WE'D HAVE TO TAKE ON TWO MONSTERS!

TWO--?!?

WHAT IS PUNY HUMAN JABBERING--

--ABOUT?



TYPICALLY CONFUSED, THE MAN-MONSTER WHIRLS-- TO FIND HIMSELF FACING THE LIVING EMBODIMENT OF THE BOGUS COLONEL BAKER'S WISHFUL THINKING!

THAT IT WAS NOT ON DECK A MERE MOMENT AGO ISN'T REALLY IMPORTANT NOW; ALL THAT MATTERS ARE ITS INTENTIONS--

--AND THOSE ARE DEFINITELY HOSTILE!

I DON'T KNOW, IF I'M DREAMIN'-- BUT SOMEBODY SURE IS!

BACK OFF, FELLAS-- AND GIVE THOSE UGLIES ROOM!

10

AND THAT PROVES A MOST PRUDENT SUGGESTION--

--AS THE GREEN GOLIATH SUDDENLY CHARGES FORWARD, DULL EYES NARROWED, THICK LIPS CURLED, SNARLING IN BESTIAL FURY--

CGHHRRHHH!!

--ONLY TO BE SWATTED ASIDE BY HIS MISSHAPEN ADVERSARY AS CASUALLY AS A MAN MIGHT SWAT A MOSQUITO!

WHAK!

HHUUNNH!!

IT IS NOT AN EXPERIENCE TO WHICH THE HULK IS ACCUSTOMED--

--AND HE IS QUICK TO MAKE HIS DISPLEASURE KNOWN!

YOU HIT HULK--
TRIED TO HURT HULK--

--AND FOR THAT... YOU WILL PAY!!

TATTERING THE REINFORCED DECK LIKE SO MUCH CONFETTI, THE MADDENED MAN-BRUTE UNLEASHES A FUSILLADE OF JAGGED STEEL--

SPROING!

--WHICH MERELY BOUNCES OFF HIS OPPONENT'S BROAD CHEST AS IF IT WERE MADE OF SPONGE RUBBER...

BAH! BLOB-THING PLAYS GAMES WITH HULK!

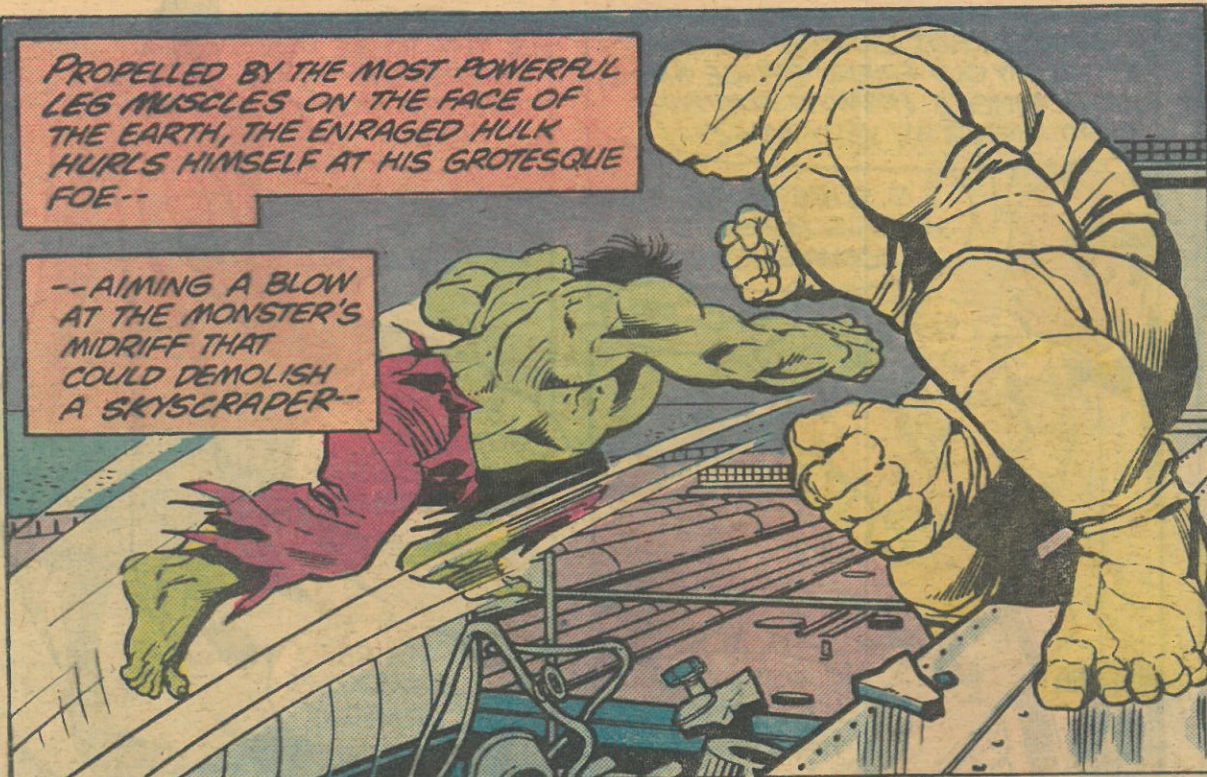
SHRAK!

HULK DOES NOT LIKE GAMES!

AND, BLOB-THING-- HULK DOES NOT LIKE YOU!!

PROPELLED BY THE MOST POWERFUL
LEG MUSCLES ON THE FACE OF
THE EARTH, THE ENRAGED HULK
HURLS HIMSELF AT HIS GROTESQUE
FOE--

--AIMING A BLOW
AT THE MONSTER'S
MIDRIFF THAT
COULD DEMOLISH
A SKYSCRAPER--



--BUT INSTEAD, MERELY
SINKS INTO THE DOUGH-LIKE
SUBSTANCE OF THE CREATURE--



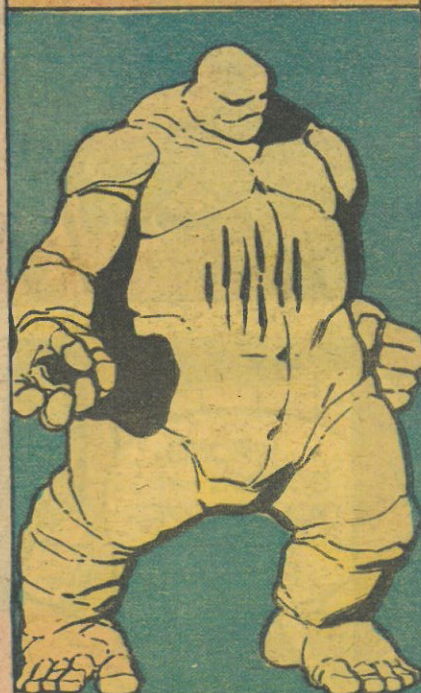
--CARRYING THE UN-
COMPREHENDING HULK
RIGHT ALONG WITH IT!



FOR SEVERAL MINUTES,
THE DOUGH-CREATURE'S
DISTORTED TORSO
CONVULSES AS THE HULK
STRUGGLES TO FREE HIMSELF--



--UNTIL, AT LAST, THE
STRUGGLING STOPS--



--AND THE DOUGH-
BEAST SHAMBLES SILENTLY
ACROSS THE DECK WITH
HIS LESS-THAN-SILENT
CAPTIVE!



LET HULK OUT,
BLOB-THING!

LET
HULK
GO!!

YOU AIN'T GOIN'
NOWHERE,
GREENIE--

--EXCEPT
WHERE WE
WANT YOU
TO GO!

ENOUGH TALKING! LET'S
GET OUR-- AH-- SECRET
WEAPON HERE ON BOARD--

--AND LET'S
FINALLY GET OUT
OF HERE!

YOU WILL PAY
FOR THIS,
LITTLE MEN!

OH, HOW YOU
WILL PAY!!

AND SECONDS
LATER, THE TWO
CARGO-COPTERS
LIFT HIGH AND
AWAY FROM THE
SUPER-TANKER--



--LEAVING A FRUS-
TRATED ALFRED
STANDING HELPLESSLY
ON DECK, ALONE
AND NOT A LITTLE
AFRAID...

SOON AFTER...

--AND I FEAR THAT'S ALL I CAN TELL YOU, COMMISSIONER GORDON.

I WISH IT WERE MORE, ALFRED.

I'VE GOT A LOT OF LOOSE ENDS HANGING HERE--

--AND I'M NOT EXACTLY CRAZY ABOUT MY OLD FRIEND BRUCE WAYNE, HARBORING A WANTED FUGITIVE RIGHT UNDER MY VERY NOSE--!

I'M SURE WAYNE HAD HIS REASONS, COMMISSIONER.

WHO--?!?

OH--IT'S YOU. I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN.

I TRY TO BE WHERE I'M NEEDED, OLD FRIEND.

BUT I'M NOT SURE YOU'RE NEEDED HERE, BATMAN.

WE'RE HANDLING THINGS.

STILL, I HAVE COMPLETE FILES ON BANNER AND THE HULK BACK IN THE BAT-CAVE! PERHAPS I CAN--

GENERAL ROSS? GOTHAM POLICE COMMISSIONER JAMES W. GORDON CALLING.

WE'VE GOT A LITTLE PROBLEM HERE...

WRONG, GORDON-- YOU'VE GOT A BIG PROBLEM!

TO MY KNOWLEDGE, THERE HAS BEEN NO MILITARY OPERATION MOUNTED IN THE PAST 24 HOURS TO APPREHEND BRUCE BANNER--

--AND, MISTER, I KNOW EVERYTHING!

HEY, IF THEY NEED A LITTLE EXTRA MUSCLE BACK THERE IN GOTHAM, TELL THEM DOC SAMSON WILL BE HAPPY TO LEND A HAND!

COMMISSIONER?

YES?

WE'VE FINALLY MANAGED TO PATCH THROUGH YOUR CALL TO NEW MEXICO, SIR.

AND, AFTER A FINAL EXCHANGE OF AMENITIES...

LOOKS LIKE YOU WERE RIGHT, ALFRED--

THOSE SO-CALLED SOLDIERS WHO NABBED BANNER WERE PHONIES!

AND IT DOESN'T TAKE A BATMAN TO GUESS WHO THEY WERE WORKING FOR!

WHEN THE SHAPER COMMANDS...

WHILE, BACK AT A CERTAIN WAREHOUSE...

I SEE YOU--AH--DREAMED UP A WAY OF CONTAINING OUR BIG GREEN GUEST WHILE YOU BROUGHT HIM HERE, ORVILLE.

YEAH, BOSS -- THOUGH I STILL CAN'T FIGURE OUT HOW THE SHAPER BROUGHT THAT DREAM TO LIFE!

WITH THE FINAL VESTIGES OF A RAPIDLY-FADING POWER, HUMAN--AT THE JOKER'S LIRGING!

BUT WHY BRING THE HAPLESS HULK HERE, JOKER? HIS MICROCEPHALIC MIND IS INCAPABLE OF ADJUSTING THE GAMMA-GUN SO IT CAN CURE ME!

RIGHT YOU ARE, SHAPER OL' SPORT! GREENIE HERE COULDN'T OUTTHINK AN OVERRIPE CAULIFLOWER!

BUT HIS ALTER-EGO, DR. ROBERT BRUCE BANNER-- AH, NOW THAT'S A VEGETABLE OF A DIFFERENT COLOR!

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS CHANGE THE HULK BACK INTO BANNER AND--

NO! NOT BANNER! HULK HATES BANNER MOST OF ALL!

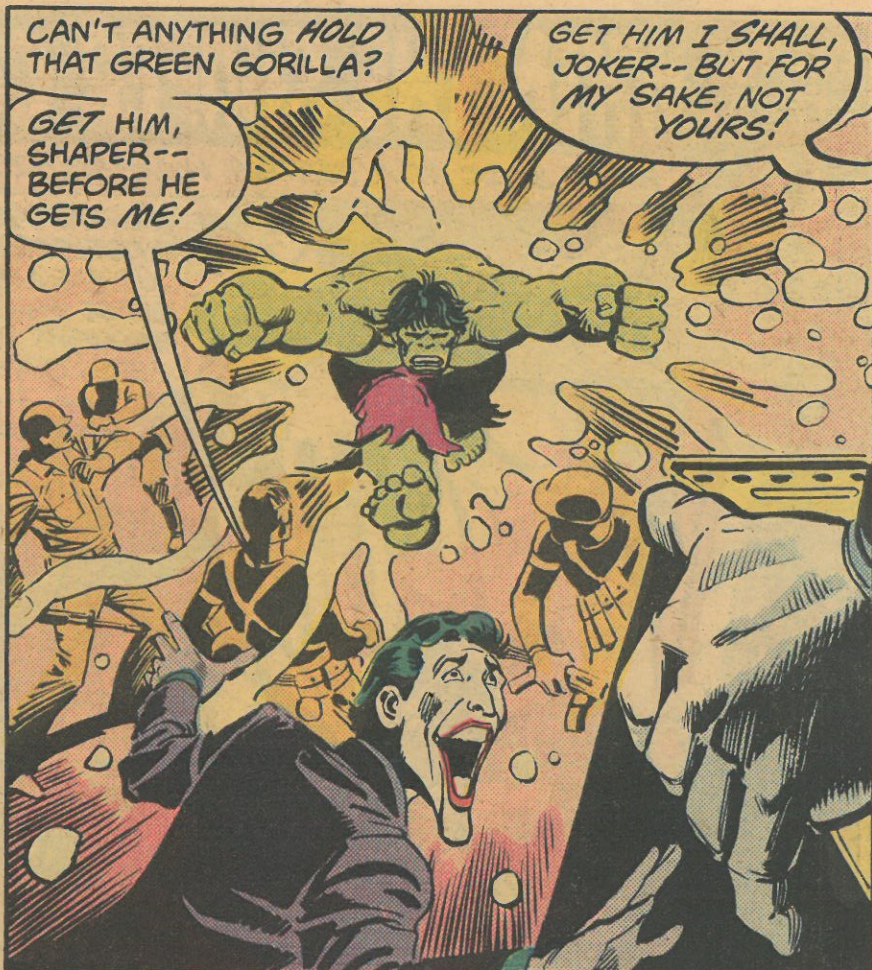
BANNER MAKES HULK GO AWAY! BANNER DRAGS HULK DOWN INTO DARKNESS!

BANNER TRIES TO DESTROY HULK--



--BUT HULK WILL DESTROY BANNER FIRST!!

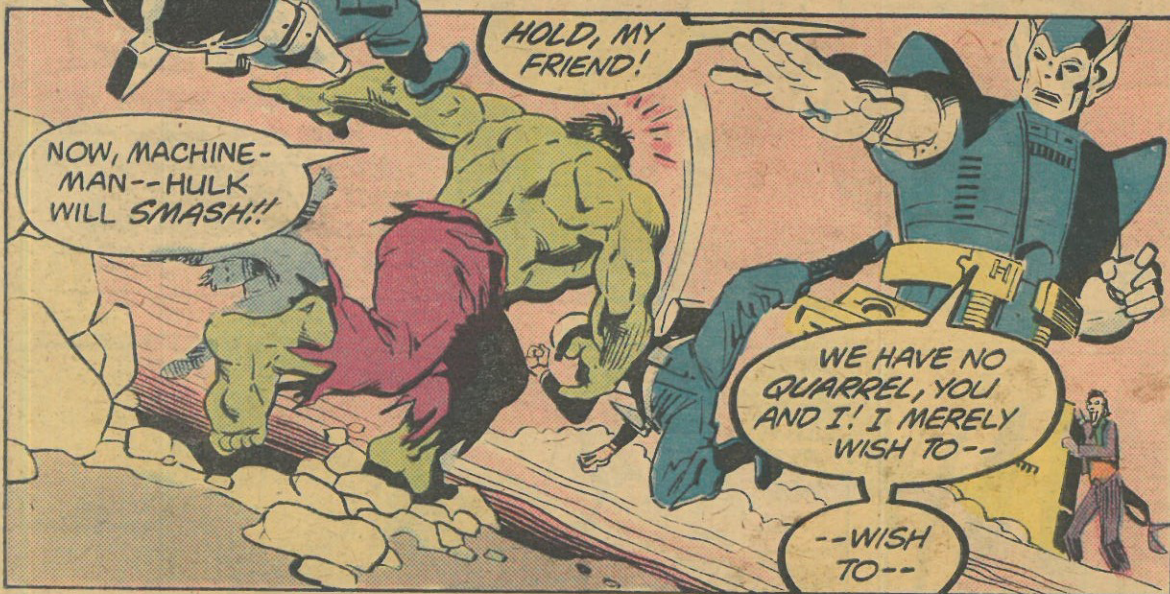
HULK WILL DESTROY YOU ALL!!



CAN'T ANYTHING HOLD THAT GREEN GORILLA?

GET HIM I SHALL, JOKER-- BUT FOR MY SAKE, NOT YOURS!

GET HIM, SHAPER-- BEFORE HE GETS ME!



HOLD, MY FRIEND!

NOW, MACHINE-MAN--HULK WILL SMASH!!

WE HAVE NO QUARREL, YOU AND I! I MERELY WISH TO--

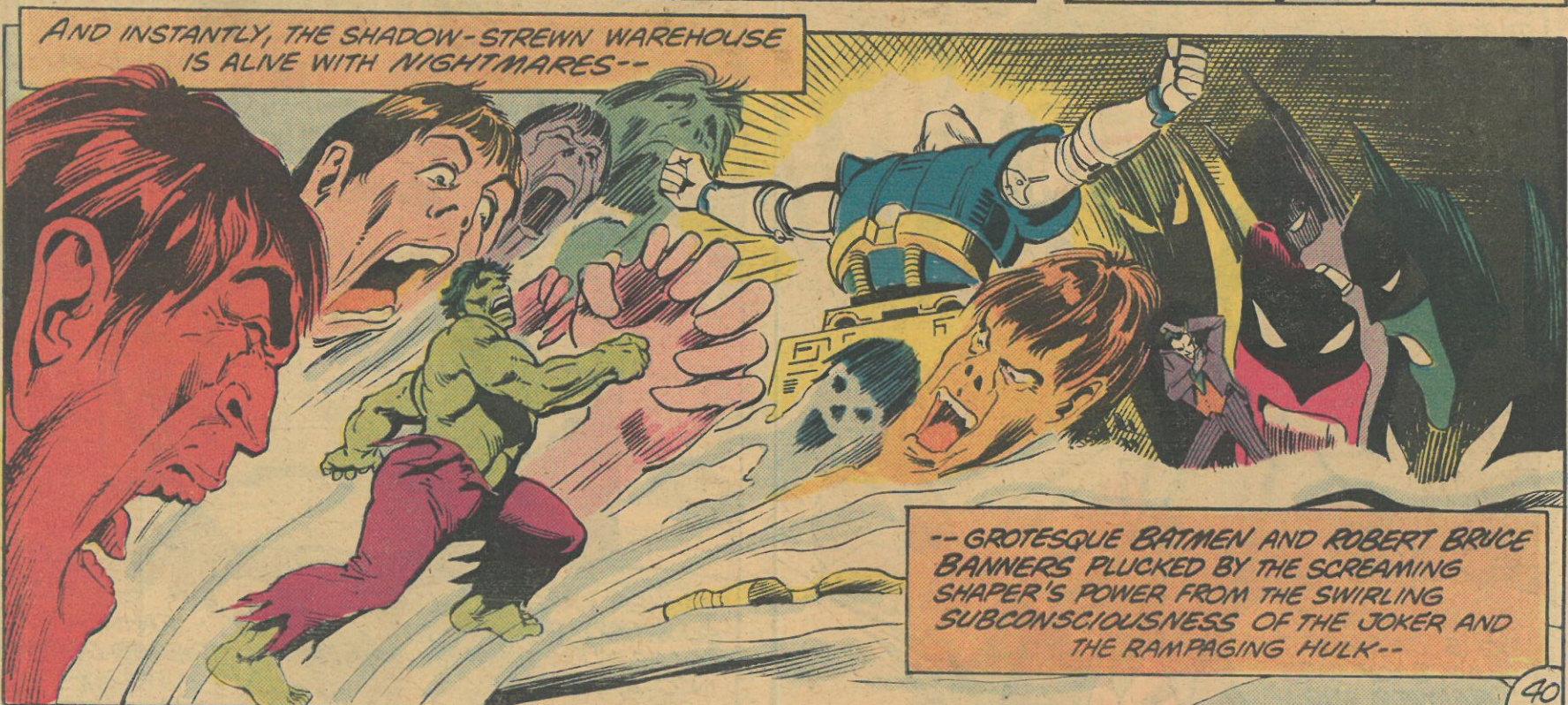
--WISH TO--



NO! IT IS TOO LATE!

MY MIND REELS! THE PAIN GROWS!

THE MADNESS HAS BEGUN!!



AND INSTANTLY, THE SHADOW-STREWN WAREHOUSE IS ALIVE WITH NIGHTMARES--

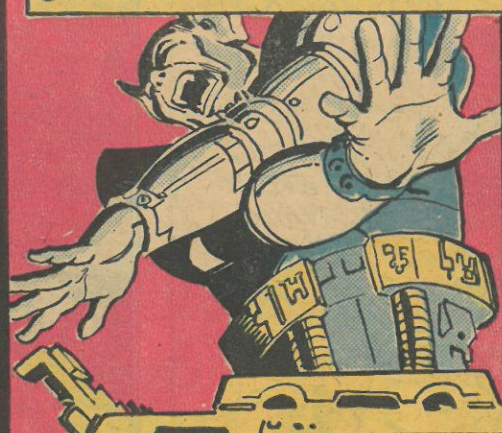
-- GROTESQUE BATMEN AND ROBERT BRUCE BANNERS PLUCKED BY THE SCREAMING SHAPER'S POWER FROM THE SWIRLING SUBCONSCIOUSNESS OF THE JOKER AND THE RAMPAGING HULK--

--BUT WHILE THE JOKER STANDS TRANS-
FIXED WITH FEAR AT THE OVERWHELMING
SIGHT OF HIS GREATEST
ENEMY TRANSMOGRIFIED--



--THE BLUDGEONING MAN-BRUTE
DEALS WITH HIS HATED FOE IN
TYPICALLY STRAIGHTFORWARD
FASHION...

THEN, FAIRLY GLOWING WITH FURY, THE HULK ADVANCES
ON THE PAIN-MADDENED SHAPER--



--A REMARKABLE REACTION OCCURRING WITH EVERY
STEP THE GREEN GOLIATH TAKES--

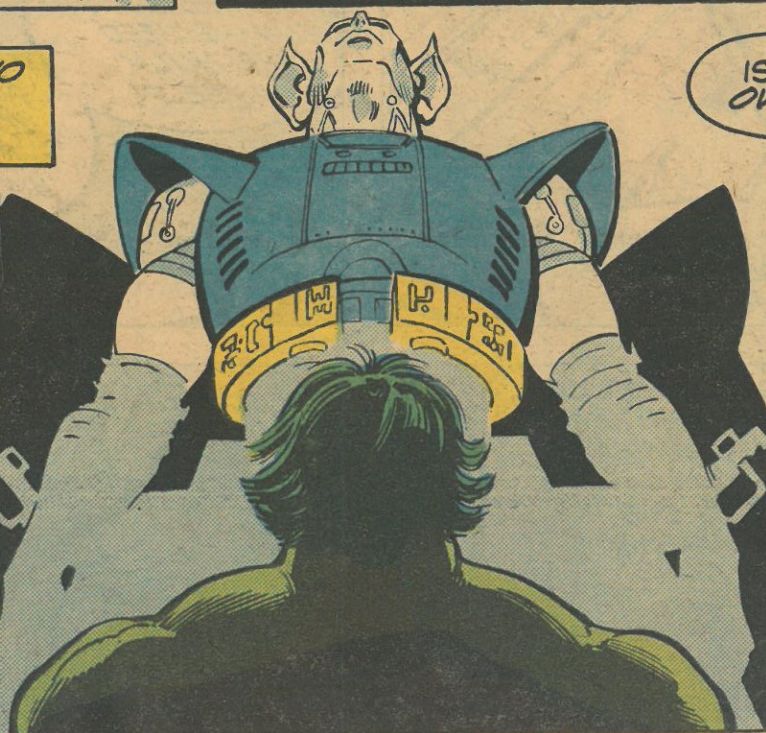


--THE FURY FADING FROM HIS BODY EVEN AS THE PAIN
RELINQUISHES ITS GRIP ON THE SHAPER--



--UNTIL, AT LAST, THE TWO
UNIQUE FIGURES STAND
SILENT FOR A MOMENT--

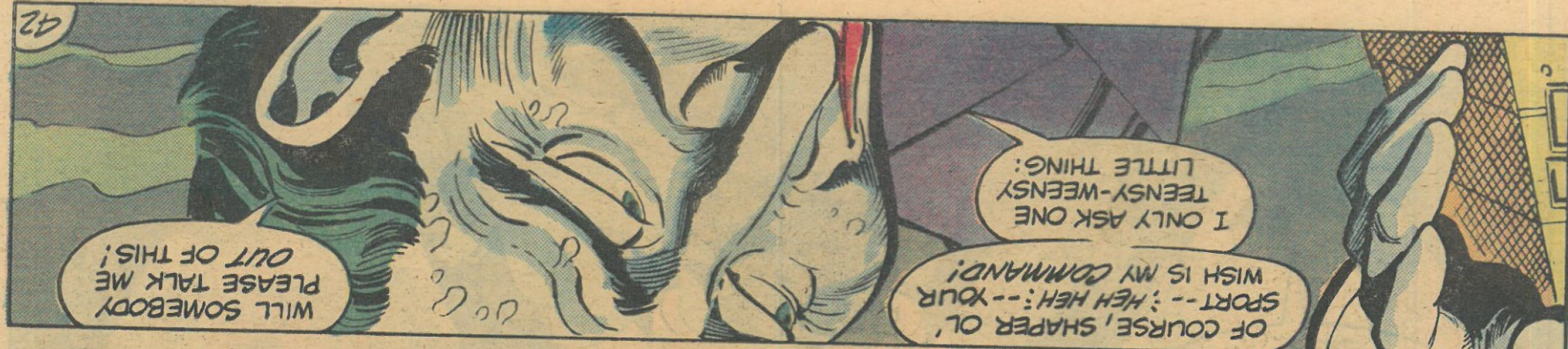
--CONFUSED, AND
EMOTIONALLY DRAINED!



IS IT
OVER?

AM I
ALIVE?

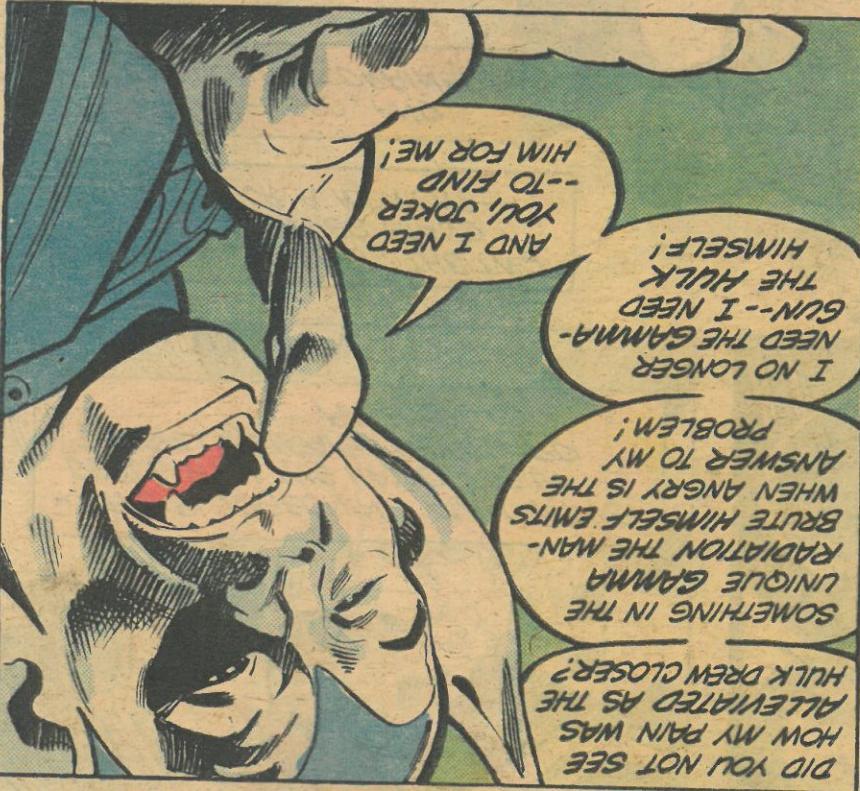
HEY--WHAT
THE DEVIL'S GOING
ON AROUND
HERE?



OF COURSE, SHAPER OL' SPORT--: HEH HEH:--YOUR WISH IS MY COMMAND!

I ONLY ASK ONE TEENSY-WEENSY LITTLE THING:

WILL SOMEBODY PLEASE TALK ME OUT OF THIS!



DID YOU NOT SEE HOW MY PAIN WAS ALLEVIATED AS THE HULK DREW CLOSER?

SOMETHING IN THE UNIQUE GAMMA RADIATION THE MAN- BRUTE HIMSELF EMITS WHEN ANGRY IS THE ANSWER TO MY PROBLEM!

I NO LONGER NEED THE GAMMA-GUN--I NEED THE HULK HIMSELF!

AND I NEED YOU, JOKER--TO FIND HIM FOR ME!



HE IS GONE! WITH MY POWER AT SUCH A LOW EBB, I COULD NOT HOLD HIM HERE!

WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO? ANOTHER FEW SECONDS AND HE WOULD HAVE RAZED THIS PLACE!

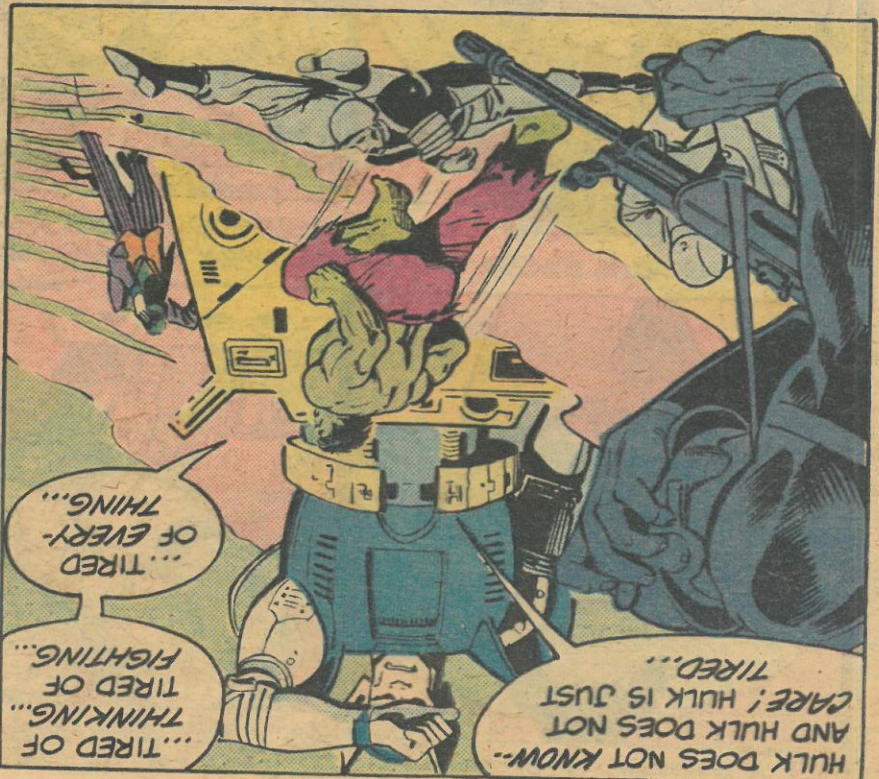
WE'LL JUST HAVE TO FIND SOME OTHER WAY TO CURE YOU!

BUT THAT WAY HAS ALREADY BEEN FOUND!



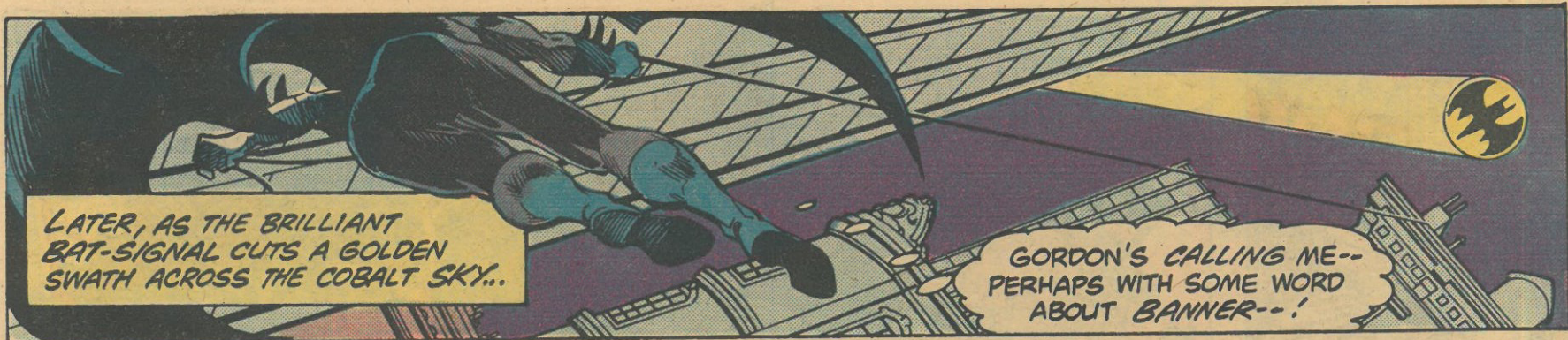
ALL HULK WANTS IS TO PEACE! FINALLY BE LEFT IN PEACE!

AND ONCE MORE THE WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL LEG MUSCLES PROPEL THE JADE-HUED GIANT SKYWARD, IN A MILES-SPANNING LEAP THAT LESSER MEN MIGHT WELL CALL FLYING...



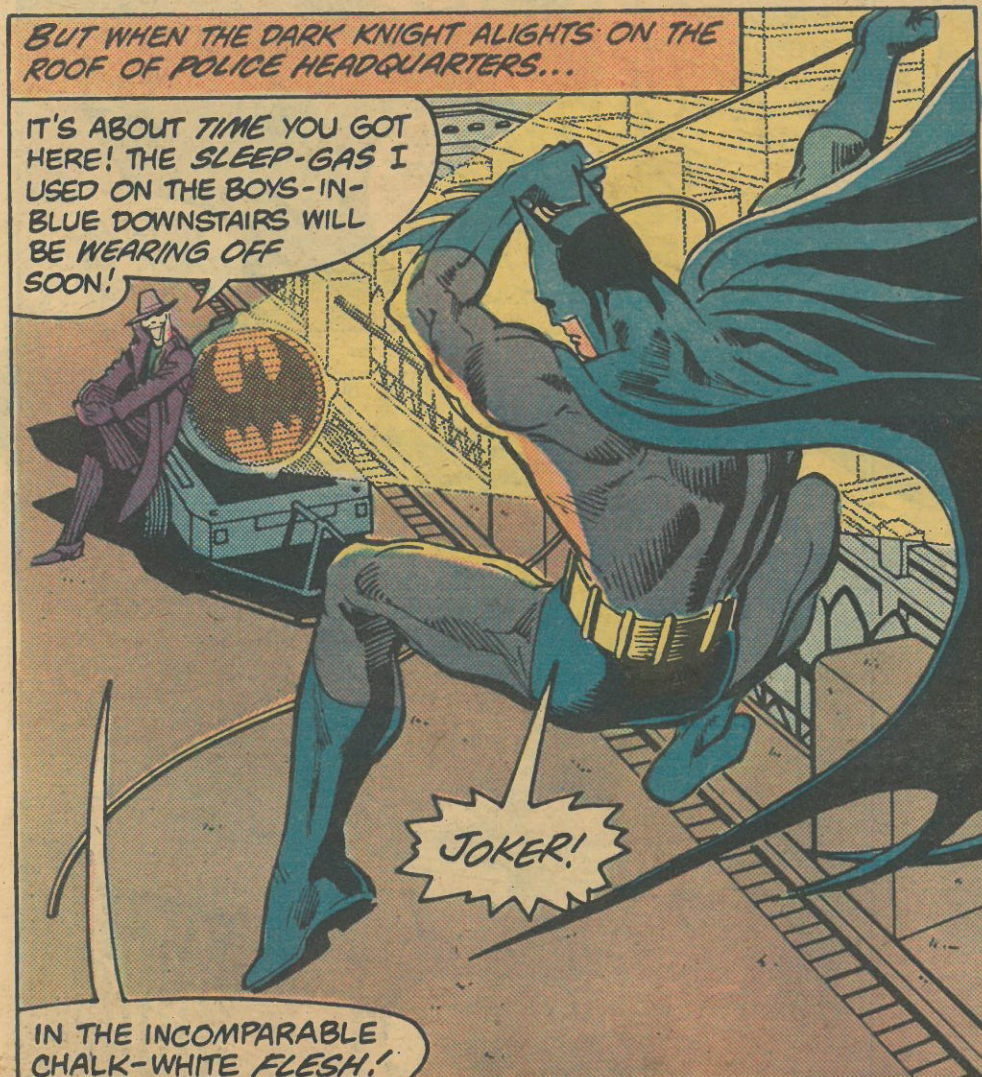
HULK DOES NOT KNOW-- AND HULK DOES NOT CARE! HULK IS JUST TIRED...

...TIRED OF THINKING... TIRED OF FIGHTING... TIRED OF EVERY-THING...



LATER, AS THE BRILLIANT BAT-SIGNAL CUTS A GOLDEN SWATH ACROSS THE COBALT SKY...

GORDON'S CALLING ME-- PERHAPS WITH SOME WORD ABOUT BANNER--!



BUT WHEN THE DARK KNIGHT ALIGHTS ON THE ROOF OF POLICE HEADQUARTERS...

IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU GOT HERE! THE SLEEP-GAS I USED ON THE BOYS-IN-BLUE DOWNSTAIRS WILL BE WEARING OFF SOON!

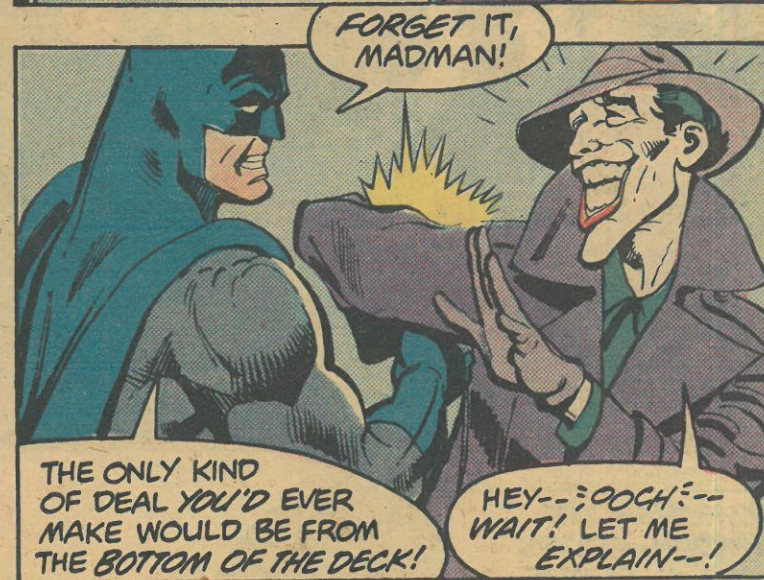
JOKER!

IN THE INCOMPARABLE CHALK-WHITE FLESH!



BUT BEFORE YOU GET PHYSICAL AS PER USUAL, THERE'S A LITTLE DEAL I'D LIKE TO OFFER YOU!

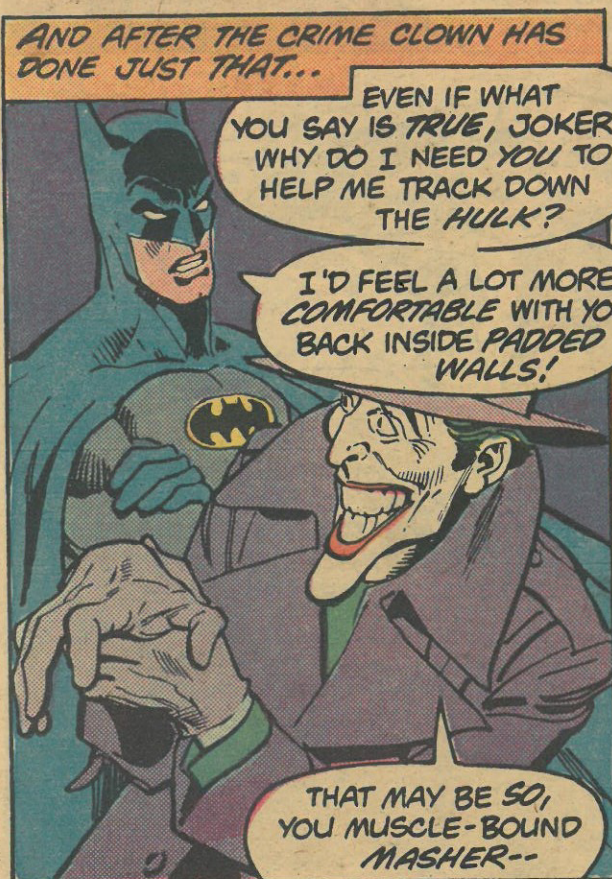
HERE'S MY HAND ON IT!



FORGET IT, MADMAN!

THE ONLY KIND OF DEAL YOU'D EVER MAKE WOULD BE FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE DECK!

HEY--! OUCH!-- WAIT! LET ME EXPLAIN--!

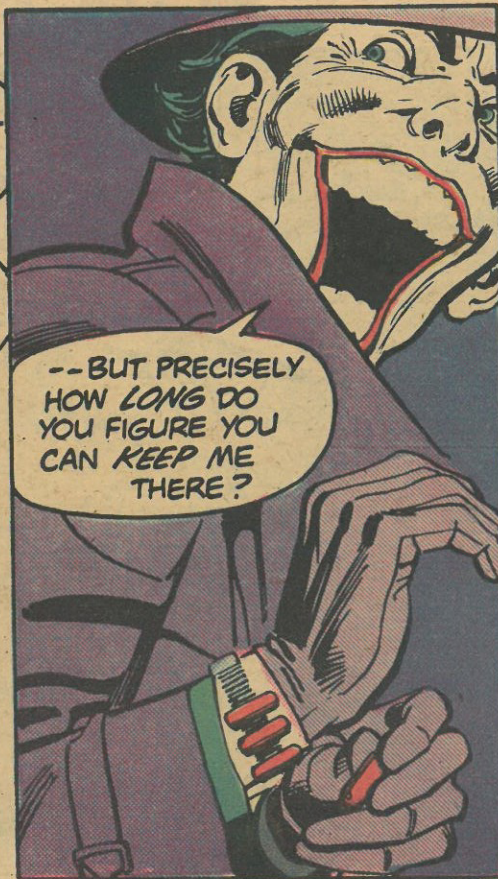


AND AFTER THE CRIME CLOWN HAS DONE JUST THAT...

EVEN IF WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE, JOKER-- WHY DO I NEED YOU TO HELP ME TRACK DOWN THE HULK?

I'D FEEL A LOT MORE COMFORTABLE WITH YOU BACK INSIDE PADDED WALLS!

THAT MAY BE SO, YOU MUSCLE-BOUND MASHER--



--BUT PRECISELY HOW LONG DO YOU FIGURE YOU CAN KEEP ME THERE?



THAT'S UP TO THE COURTS TO--EH?

SMOKE-BOMB! HE MUST'VE HAD IT HIDDEN UP HIS SLEEVE!

HAHAHAH

CHUFF!

GOT TO GRAB HIM BEFORE HE--

--KNOWING THAT HIS
AIMLESS BOUNDING MAY
HAVE TAKEN THE MAN-BRUTE
ANYWHERE BY NOW, EVEN
OUT OF GOTHAM--
--AND KNOWING THE
PRICE THE WORLD
WILL PAY IF HE IS NOT
FOUND SOON--

THROUGH THE
WINDING STREETS
AND ALLEYWAYS
OF GOTHAM,
THESE MIS-
MATCHED
MANHUNTERS
CARRY THEIR
QUEST FOR THE
ELUSIVE HULK--



PUT 'ER
THERE...
PARTNER!

FORGET IT! I ONLY
SAID I'D WORK
WITH YOU!

I NEVER
SAID I'D HAVE
TO LIKE IT!



GO AHEAD,
BATMAN, PLAY
HIGH-AND-MIGHTY
WITH ME... WHILE
YOU CAN!

BUT WHEN THIS IS
OVER, THE WHOLE
WORLD WILL BE
PLAYING BY MY
RULES!



--DISAPPEARS.



EH? NOW
HE'S BEHIND
ME--?

AND I COULD
KEEP THIS UP
ALL NIGHT IF
I WANTED TO--
BUT I TRUST
I'VE MADE MY
POINT!

AM I
COMING
WITH
YOU?



ALL RIGHT, JOKER--
FOR NOW!

BUT I STILL
DON'T TRUST
YOU HALF
AS FAR AS I
CAN THROW
YOU!

NATURALLY
NOT! WHO
DOES?

THUS, WHEN AT LAST THEY COME UPON THE HULK, ONCE MORE VENTING HIS SEEMINGLY-INEXHAUSTIBLE RAGE, THEY ALMOST BREATHE A SIGH OF RELIEF...

AYE--ALMOST.

LITTLE MEN TRIED TO HURT HULK WHILE HULK SLEPT IN ALLEY!

NOW HULK WILL PUT LITTLE MEN TO SLEEP--FOREVER!!

NEXT TIME YOU WANNA MUG SOMEONE, MORTY--DO IT ALONE!

HULK--LISTEN TO ME!

HULK--WAIT! PUT THOSE BOYS DOWN!

HUH--?!

YOU AGAIN--?!

YOU TRIED TO PROTECT THOSE WHO WOULD HURT HULK--

--SO HULK WILL SMASH YOU INSTEAD!

HULK--NO! WE'RE NOT HERE TO FIGHT WITH YOU!

WE ONLY WANT TO TALK!

WHY DON'T WE JUST PHONE HIM, BATS--

--SAY, LONG DISTANCE?!

BAH! HULK HATES TALK!

PUNY HUMANS TWIST THEIR WORDS TO TRICK HULK--TO CONFUSE HULK--!

HULK COULD CRUSH PUNY HUMANS LIKE THIS!

BUT WHY BOTHER--WHEN HULK CAN LEAVE PUNY HUMANS AND THEIR TWISTED WORDS BEHIND!

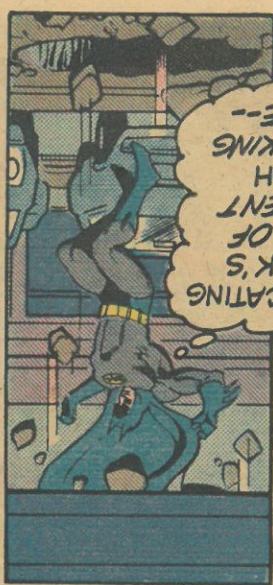
IF YOU ARE SMART, LITTLE MEN--YOU WILL NOT FOLLOW HULK!



HULK WARNED YOU, POINTY-EARS! WHY DO PUNY HUMANS NEVER LISTEN? 46

HUH? POINTY-EARS FOLLOWED HULK--?!

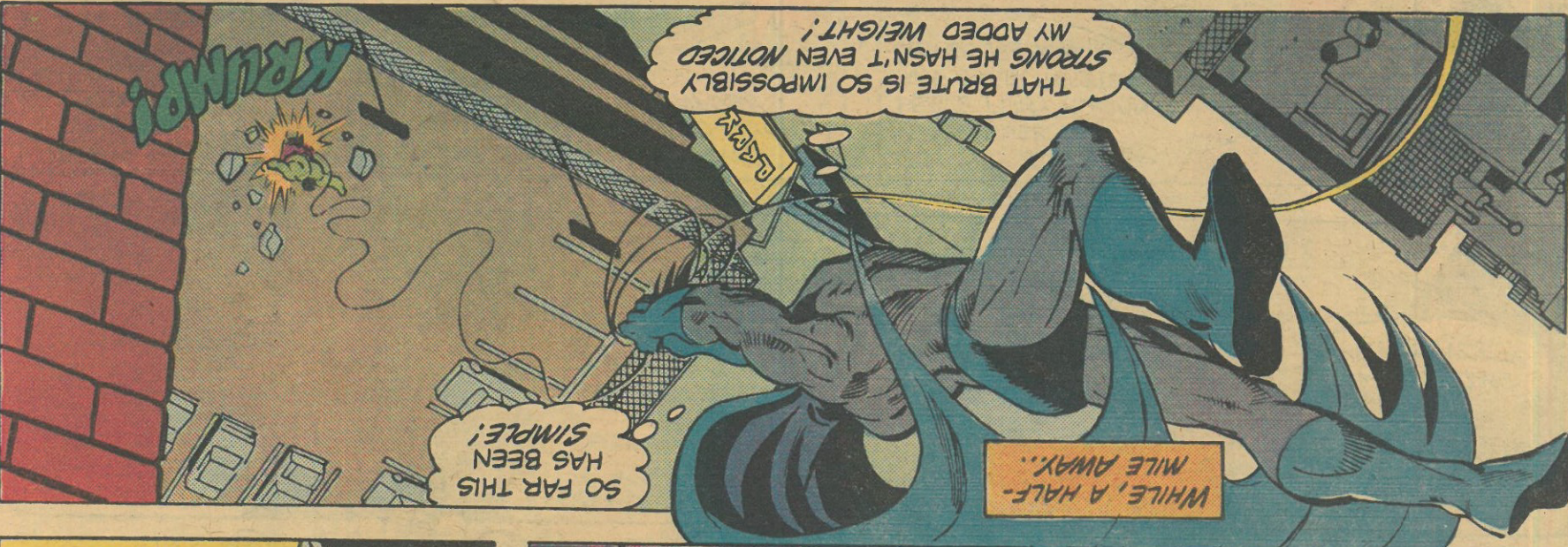
--WITHOUT SPLATTERING MYSELF ALL OVER THE WALLS!



--DUPLICATING THE HULK'S ANGLE OF DESCENT THROUGH THIS PARKING GARAGE--



THE HARD PART IS GOING TO BE LANDING--

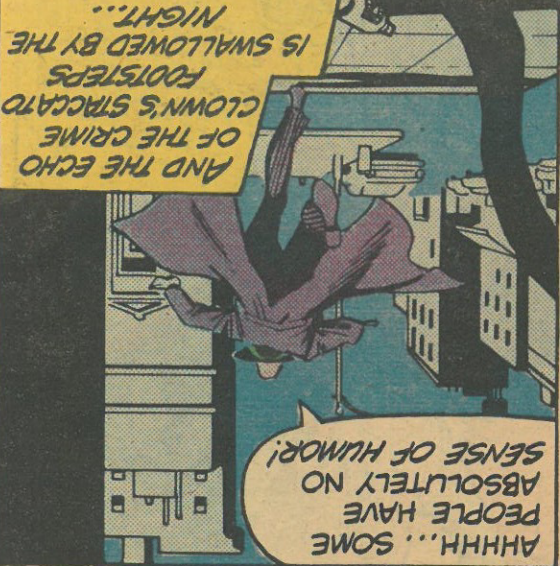


WHILE, A HALF-MILE AWAY...

THAT BRUTE IS SO IMPOSSIBLY STRONG HE HASN'T EVEN NOTICED MY ADDED WEIGHT!

SO FAR THIS HAS BEEN SIMPLE!

KRUMPH!



AND THE ECHO OF THE CRIME FOOTSTEPS IS SWALLOWED BY THE NIGHT...

AND THE ECHO OF THE CRIME FOOTSTEPS IS SWALLOWED BY THE NIGHT...

AND THE ECHO OF THE CRIME FOOTSTEPS IS SWALLOWED BY THE NIGHT...



FOLLOW YOU--AND FACE THE HULK AGAIN?

YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING, RIGHT?

RIGHT?



TRY TO FOLLOW US AS BEST YOU CAN!

WHEREVER HE GOES, I GO!

HE GOES, I GO!



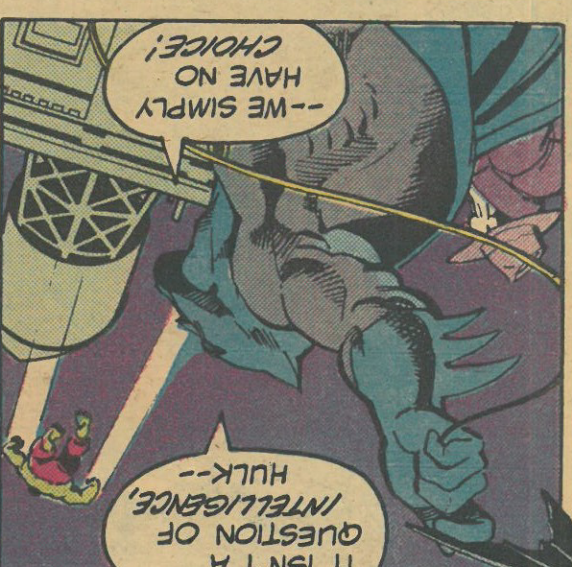
QUICK-- LET GO OF THE ROPE!

NOT A CHANCE!

AND THE STEEL-EYED BATMAN SUDDENLY BECOMES AIRBORNE!

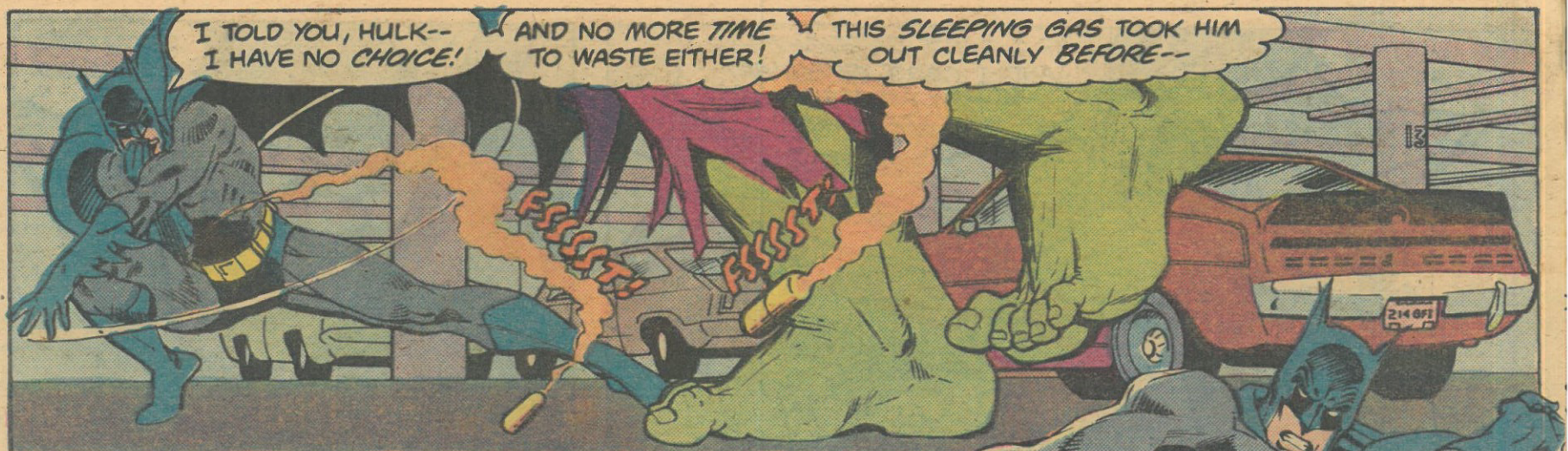


LIKE A THING ALIVE, THE BATARANG SNAKES SKYWARD, SNARLING THE FLEEING HULK'S ANKLE--



IT ISN'T A QUESTION OF INTELLIGENCE, HULK--

--WE SIMPLY HAVE NO CHOICE!



I TOLD YOU, HULK--
I HAVE NO CHOICE!

AND NO MORE TIME
TO WASTE EITHER!

THIS SLEEPING GAS TOOK HIM
OUT CLEANLY BEFORE--



BUT THIS
TIME...

BAH! POINTY-
EARS WILL NOT
TRICK HULK
WITH STUPID GAS
AGAIN!

INCREDIBLE!
HE BLEW THE GAS
AWAY WITH A
SINGLE PINWHEEL-
WAVE OF HIS
OVERSIZED
ARM--!



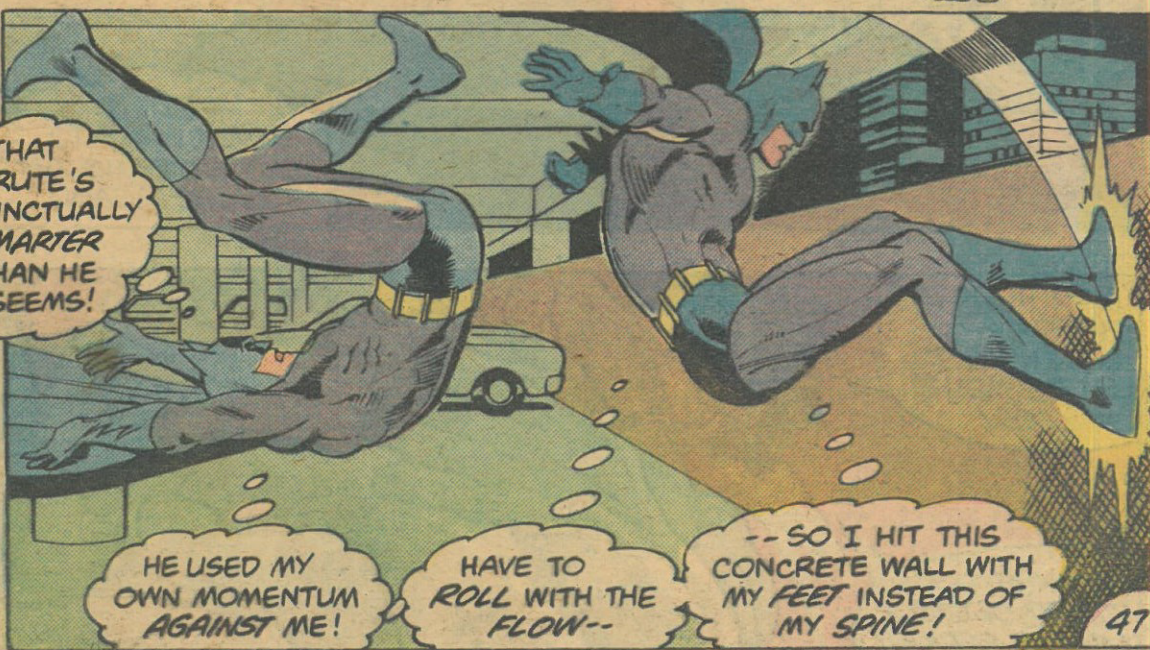
AND POINTY-EARS WILL NOT
KICK HULK AGAIN EITHER!

IF YOU LIKE TO
FLY THROUGH THE
AIR SO MUCH,
POINTY-EARS--



--HULK
WILL
HELP
YOU!!

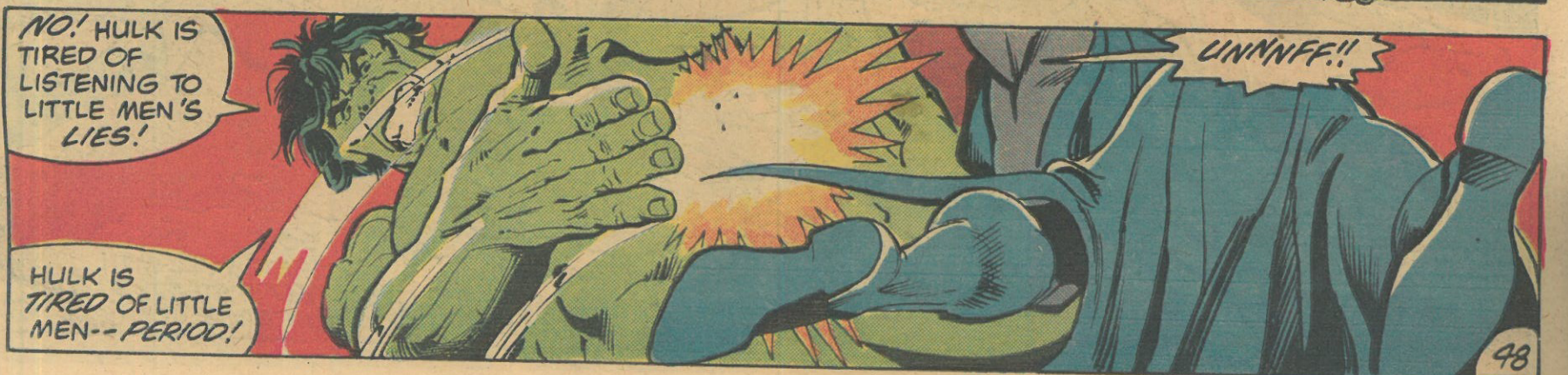
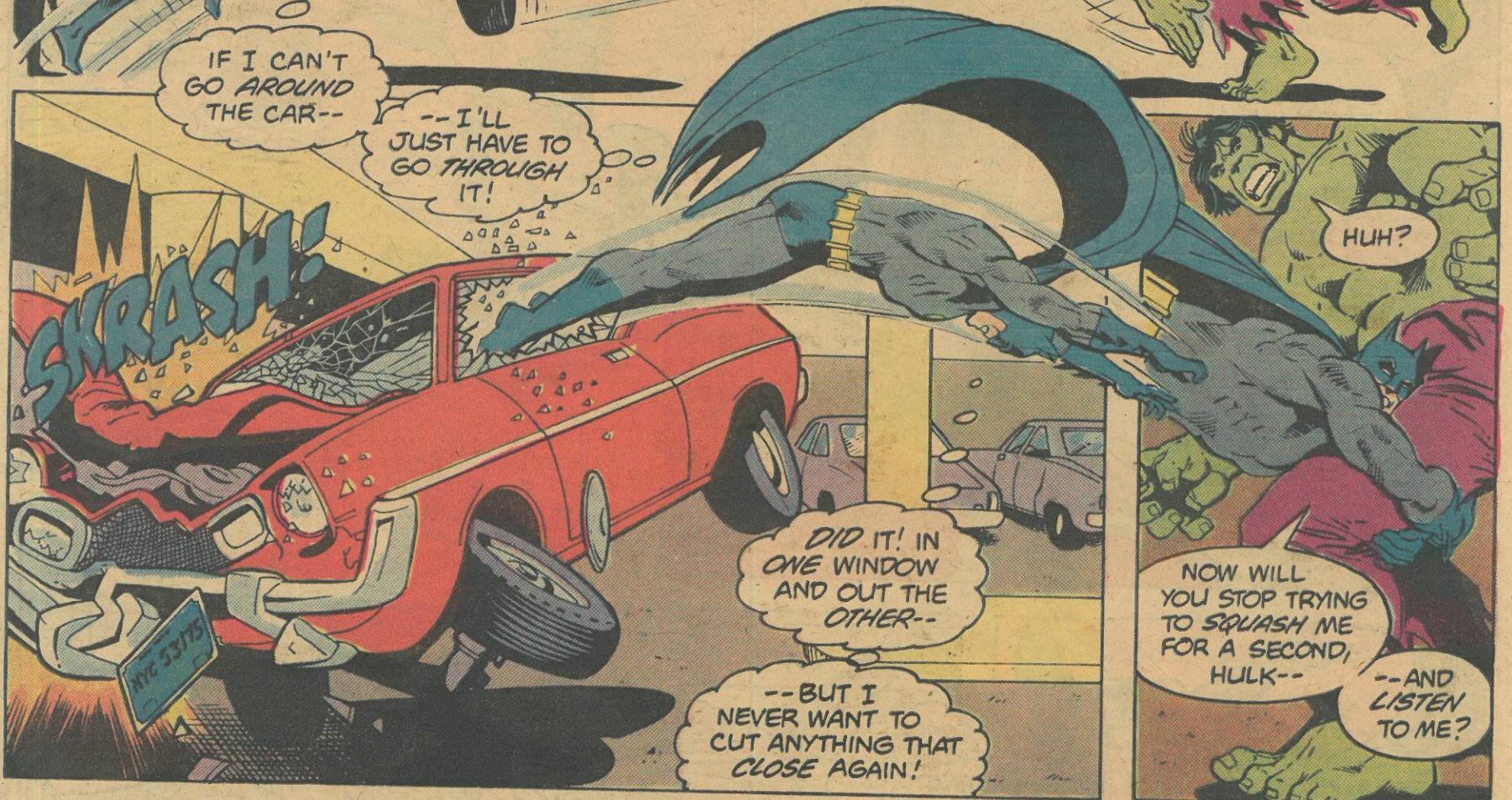
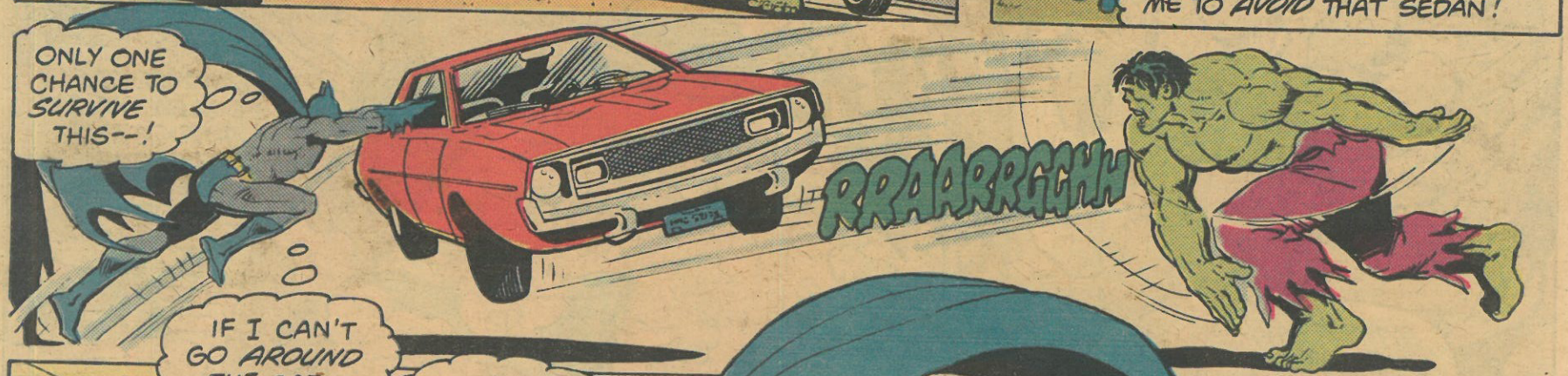
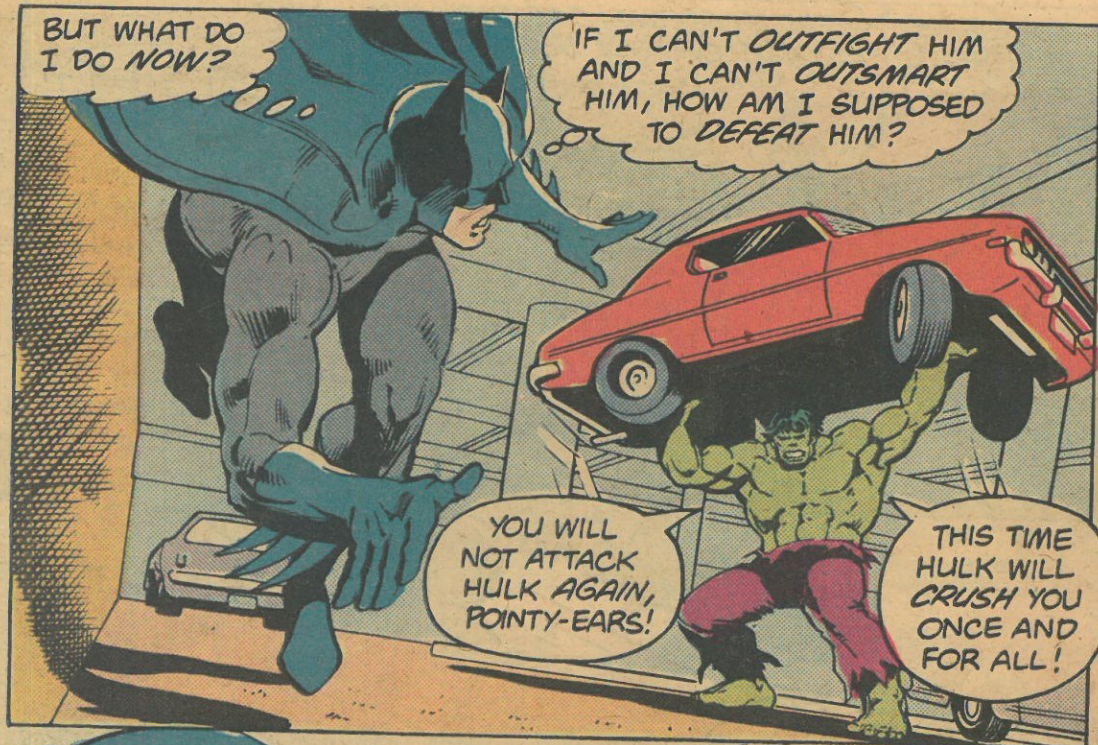
THAT
BRUTE'S
INSTINCTUALLY
SMARTER
THAN HE
SEEMS!

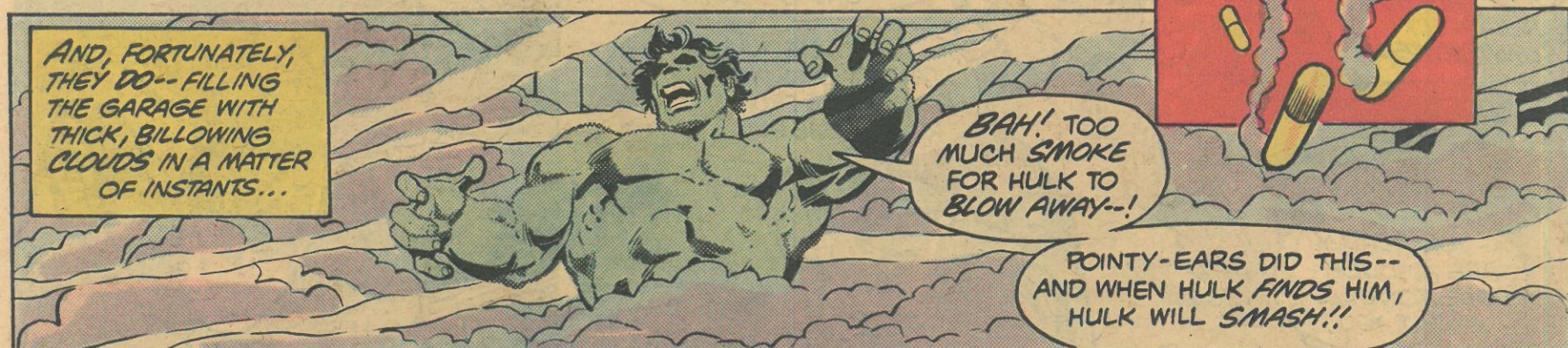


HE USED MY
OWN MOMENTUM
AGAINST ME!

HAVE TO
ROLL WITH THE
FLOW--

-- SO I HIT THIS
CONCRETE WALL WITH
MY FEET INSTEAD OF
MY SPINE!





50

IS THERE SOMETHING AN OLD BLIND MAN CAN DO TO HELP YOU, FRIEND?

EH? IS SOMEBODY THERE IN DARKNESS?

ALWAYS MORE...

...LIKE HIM!

NOW, LITTLE MAN-- YOU DIE!

SOME TIME LATER, AS THE STILL-SEETHING MAN-BRUTE AIMLESSLY WANDERS THE DESERTED STREETS...

STUPID LITTLE MEN! HULK WOULD SMASH THEM ALL IF HULK COULD--

TRASH!

--BUT NO MATTER HOW MANY HULK SMASHES, THERE ARE ALWAYS MORE!

WELL, BATS--WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO NOW? JADE-JAWS DOESN'T EXACTLY SEEM EAGER TO TALK TO US!

DON'T WORRY, JOKER--ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, HE WILL!

AND BY THE WAY--STOP CALLING ME "BATS"!

SPARE ME THE HUMOR, JOKER! WHEN THE CEILING COLLAPSED, I THREW MYSELF UNDER THESE CROSS-BEAMS! THEY ACTED AS A CANOPY OF SORTS TO PROTECT ME FROM THE REST OF THE RUBBLE!

AND I SHOULD KNOW--I'VE TRIED OFTEN ENOUGH!

YOU REALLY ARE A TOUGH ONE TO KILL, AREN'T YOU?

--NEVER DOUBTING THAT HE WILL FIND THE BATMAN HERE, ALIVE AND RELATIVELY UNHARMED...

--LEAVING ANOTHER, MORE GAUDILY-GARBED FIGURE TO SCRAMBLE THRU THE WRECKAGE--

--AND BOUNDS AWAY INTO THE DARK--

FOR SEVERAL MOMENTS, THE WORLD IS SMOKE AND SILENCE--THEN A BRUTISH EMERALD FIGURE FINALLY PULLS HIMSELF FROM THE RUBBLE--

FRIEND: AT THE SOUND OF THE WORD, THE GREEN GOLIATH PAUSES... PONDERS... THEN SLOWLY UNCLENCHES HIS FISTS!

BAH! YOU CANNOT HELP HULK, OLD MAN! NOBODY CAN HELP HULK!

YOU SOUND TROUBLED, MY FRIEND.

OLD MAN, TROUBLE IS ALL HULK KNOWS!

THEN COME-- STAY WITH ME FOR A WHILE!

IF YOU'D LIKE TO TELL ME ABOUT IT-- I'D LIKE TO LISTEN.

MAYBE OLD MAN IS RIGHT... MAYBE HULK SHOULD HELP PUNY HUMANS...

...IF HULK ONLY KNEW WHERE TO START!

AND IF THAT'S NOT A CUE, I DON'T KNOW WHAT ^{IS}!

IF YOU WANT TO HELP THE WORLD, HULK-- JUST COME ALONG WITH ME!

HUH?

HULK CANNOT STAY LONG, OLD MAN-- IT IS NOT SAFE!

WHEREVER HULK GOES, PUNY HUMANS FOLLOW HULK-- AROUND HULK-- TRY TO DESTROY HULK...

...AND HULK DOES NOT EVEN KNOW WHY!

NEITHER DO I...

...BUT MAYBE IF YOU'D STOP FIGHTING PEOPLE AND TRY HELPING THEM A LITTLE, THINGS COULD CHANGE FOR YOU.

IF A FELLA WANTS TO HAVE FRIENDS, FIRST HE HAS TO BE A FRIEND.

DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M TRYING TO TELL YOU... FRIEND?

NO, MY FRIEND-- YOU'RE ACTING WITHOUT THINKING AGAIN!

IF YOU TRULY WANT TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE, YOU MUST GO WITH THE JOKER!

THE MAN'S TALKING SENSE, GREENIE-- LISTEN TO HIM!

WHAT IS STUPID WHITE-FACE DOING HERE?

KEEP AWAY FROM HULK, WHITE-FACE-- OR HULK WILL SMASH!

HUHN! THEN HULK WILL GO WITH WHITE-FACE... FOR NOW!

JUST SO LONG AS YOU GO, HULK-- THAT'S ALL THAT REALLY MATTERS!

CHAPTER FIVE

WHEN MADNESS REIGNS...

LIKE RIPPLES ACROSS A POND, WAVES OF PURE CREATIVE ENERGY EXPAND OUTWARD FROM A NOW-FAMILIAR WAREHOUSE...

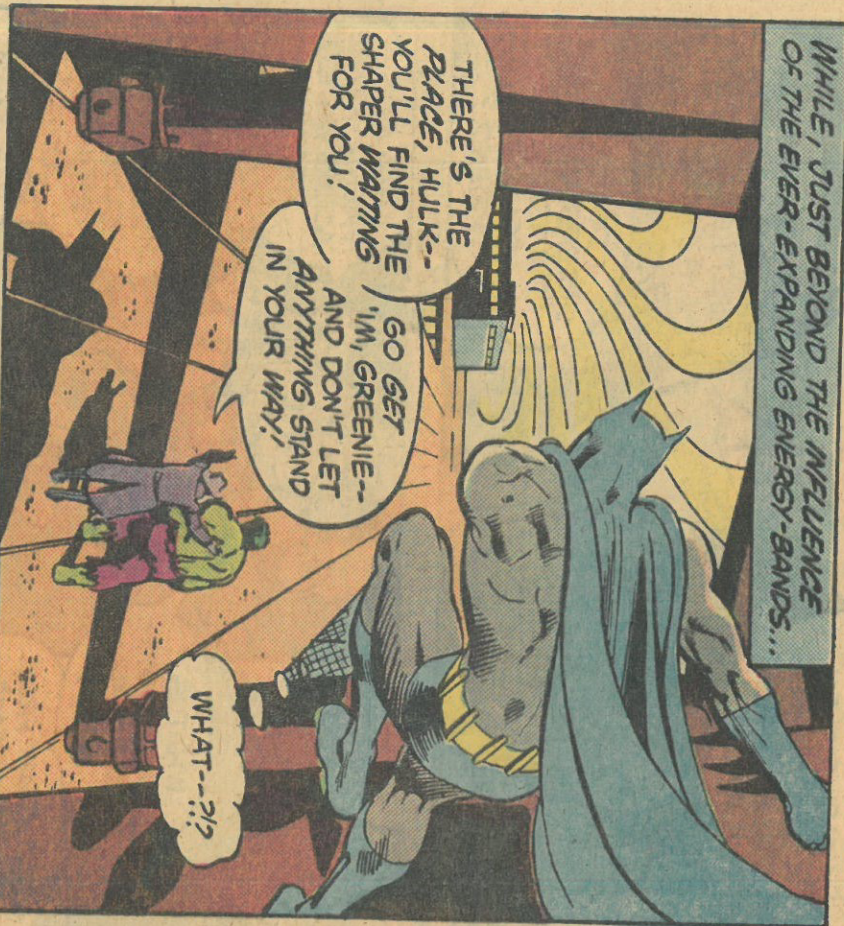
FOR THE TEMPORARY REMISSION HE EXPERIENCED AFTER HIS ENCOUNTER WITH THE HULK HAS ENDED--

--AND THE SHAPER OF WORLDS IS OVERWHELMINGLY MAD ONCE MORE!



ARRRRGGHH!

WHILE, JUST BEYOND THE INFLUENCE OF THE EVER-EXPANDING ENERGY-BANDS...



THERE'S THE PLACE, HULK-- YOU'LL FIND THE SHAPER WAITING FOR YOU!

GO GET 'IM, GREENIE-- AND DON'T LET ANYTHING STAND IN YOUR WAY!

WHAT--?!



HEY, I MAY BE CRAZY, BATS-- BUT I'M NOT SUICIDAL!

JOKER, WHAT ARE YOU DOING? YOU CAN'T LET THAT MINDLESS MONSTER CONFRONT THE SHAPER ALONE!

I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE NEAR THAT WAREHOUSE UNTIL THIS IS OVER!



WHY, YOU SPINELESS WORM--!

SHAK!

SOMEONE HAS TO GO WITH THE HULK--TO SUPPORT HIM--! GUIDE HIM--!



WELL, BETTER YOU THAN ME, BATS-- BETTER YOU THAN ME!

HULK-- WAIT! I'M COMING WITH YOU!

HUH? WHAT IS POINTY-EARS DOING HERE?



I'M HERE TO HELP YOU, HULK... IF YOU'LL HAVE ME.

BEFORE THIS IS FINISHED, FRIEND-- WE MAY BOTH BE!

AND, AS IF IN RESPONSE TO THE DARK KNIGHT'S UNSPOKEN THOUGHT, THE AIR SUDDENLY SHUDDERS-- CONGEALS--

--AND MURDER COMES STRIDING OUT OF THE MIST!

HUH?? IT IS HULK'S ENEMIES... RHINO... ABOMINATION... AND LEADER!

NOT TO MENTION MY OWN TWO-FACE... KILLER MOTH... AND SCARECROW!

BUT THEY CAN'T BE REAL-- ONLY MANIFESTATIONS OF OUR OWN MEMORIES!

BUT MEMORIES OR NOT, THEY CAN STILL KILL US-- IF WE LET THEM!

BAH! HULK HAS FOUGHT LEADER'S MURDER-MODULE BEFORE--

--AND WON!

I DON'T DOUBT THAT FOR AN INSTANT, HULK!

BUT THIS IS NO ORDINARY BATTLE WE'RE FIGHTING HERE--

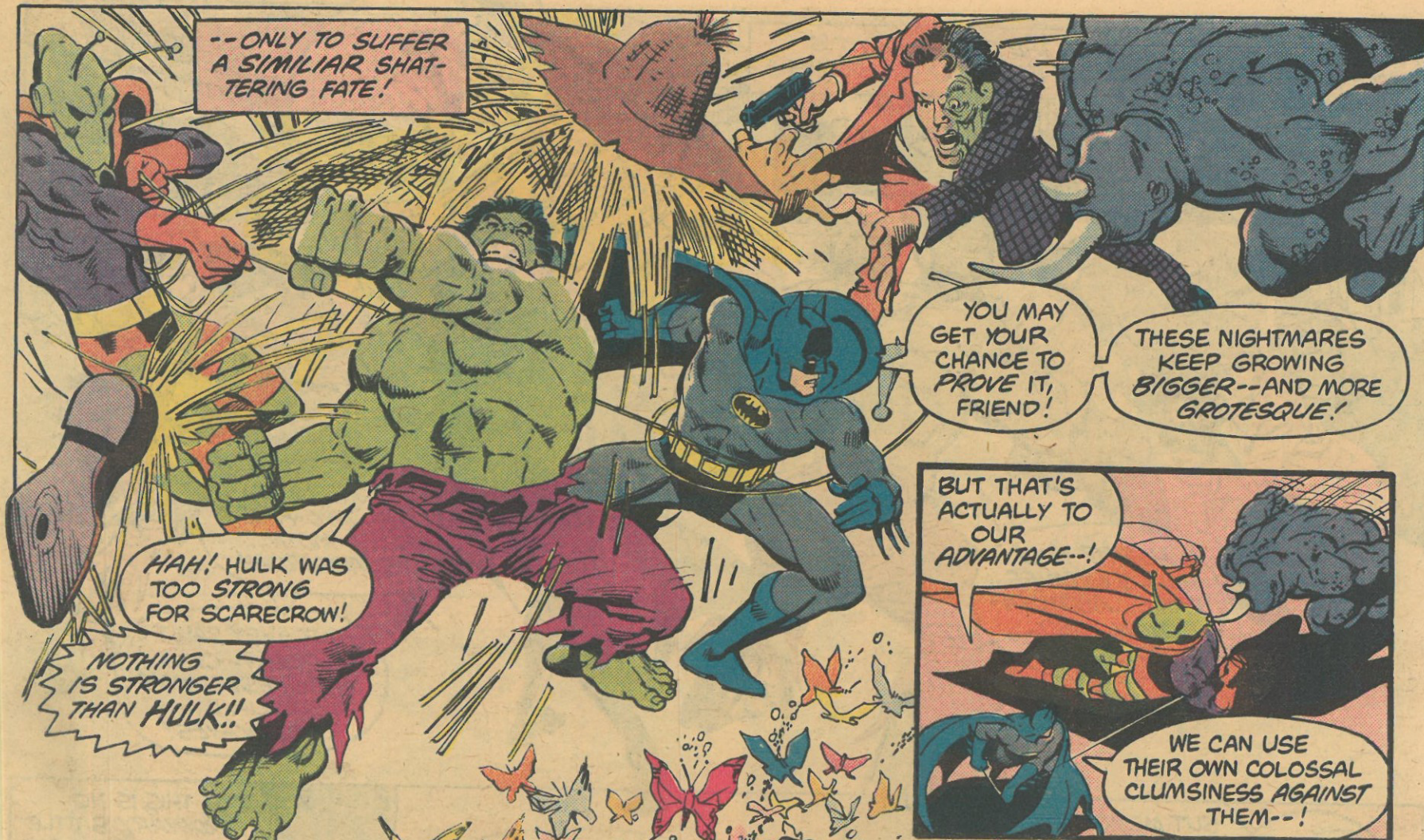
--AND THESE LIVING NIGHTMARES OUT-NUMBER US THREE-TO-ONE!

HEE HEE HEE

SPINDLY LEGS TANGLED, THE MURDER-MODULE AND ITS MONSTROUS MASTER TOPPLE HEAVILY, SHATTERING LIKE SO MUCH DELICATE CRYSTAL--

SKRASH!

--WHILE A CACKLING SCARECROW WRAPS HIS MISSHAPEN BURLAP FINGERS TIGHTLY ABOUT A THICK EMERALD THROAT--



-- ONLY TO SUFFER
A SIMILIAR SHAT-
TERING FATE!

YOU MAY
GET YOUR
CHANCE TO
PROVE IT,
FRIEND!

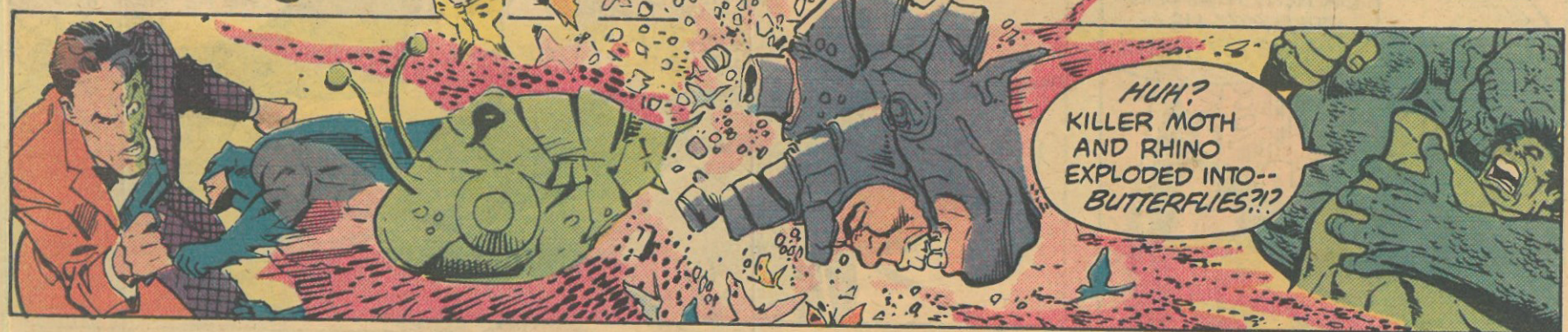
THESE NIGHTMARES
KEEP GROWING
BIGGER--AND MORE
GROTESQUE!

HIAH! HULK WAS
TOO STRONG
FOR SCARECROW!

NOTHING
IS STRONGER
THAN HULK!!

BUT THAT'S
ACTUALLY TO
OUR
ADVANTAGE--!

WE CAN USE
THEIR OWN COLOSSAL
CLUMSINESS AGAINST
THEM--!



HUH?
KILLER MOTH
AND RHINO
EXPLODED INTO--
BUTTERFLIES?!!

WHILE, STANDING
ON THE SO-CALLED
SIDELINES, A
NERVOUS JOKER
WATCHES THE
INCREDIBLE COM-
BAT WITH MIXED
EMOTIONS--



--AS A NIGHTMARE
ABOMINATION IS
SMASHED INTO A
FLURRY OF ANGRY
LIZARDS, WHICH
SLITHER AWAY INTO
THE SHADOWS--

--AND A NIGHTMARE
TWO-FACE, LIKE A
PIECE OF CHEAP CLAY
POTTERY, IS SAVAGELY
SPLIT IN TWO..

FOR A MOMENT, THE BATMAN AND THE HULK
STAND BACK-TO-BACK, READY FOR WHATEVER
MIGHT COME NEXT--

--AND WHEN NOTHING
COMES, THEY CONTINUE
THEIR DESPERATE RACE
TO THE WAREHOUSE...

DOOR'S
LOCKED!
I'LL HAVE TO
PICK IT!

BAH!
PUNY DOOR
WILL NOT
KEEP OUT
HULK!!

PERHAPS NOT--BUT SOMETHING CERTAINLY
STOPS THE MAN-BRUTE'S CHARGE...

HUH? HULK HAS
BEEN THROWN BACK--
BY SOMETHING
HULK CAN'T
SEE!

I THINK I
UNDERSTAND, HULK--

THE SHAPER
IS RADIATING SO
MUCH ENERGY,
IT'S CREATED AN
IMPENETRABLE
BARRIER OF
SOME SORT!

BARRIER
IS STRONGER
THAN HULK?

THAT'S IT!
THAT'S THE
SOLUTION!

IT CERTAINLY SEEMS
THE BARRIER IS
STRONGER, HULK!

NO! NOTHING IS
STRONGER THAN
HULK! NOTHING!!

HULK IS THE
STRONGEST
ONE THERE IS!!

WITH UN-
IMAGINABLE
FURY, THE
HULK
HAMMERS
THE UNSEEN
BARRIER--

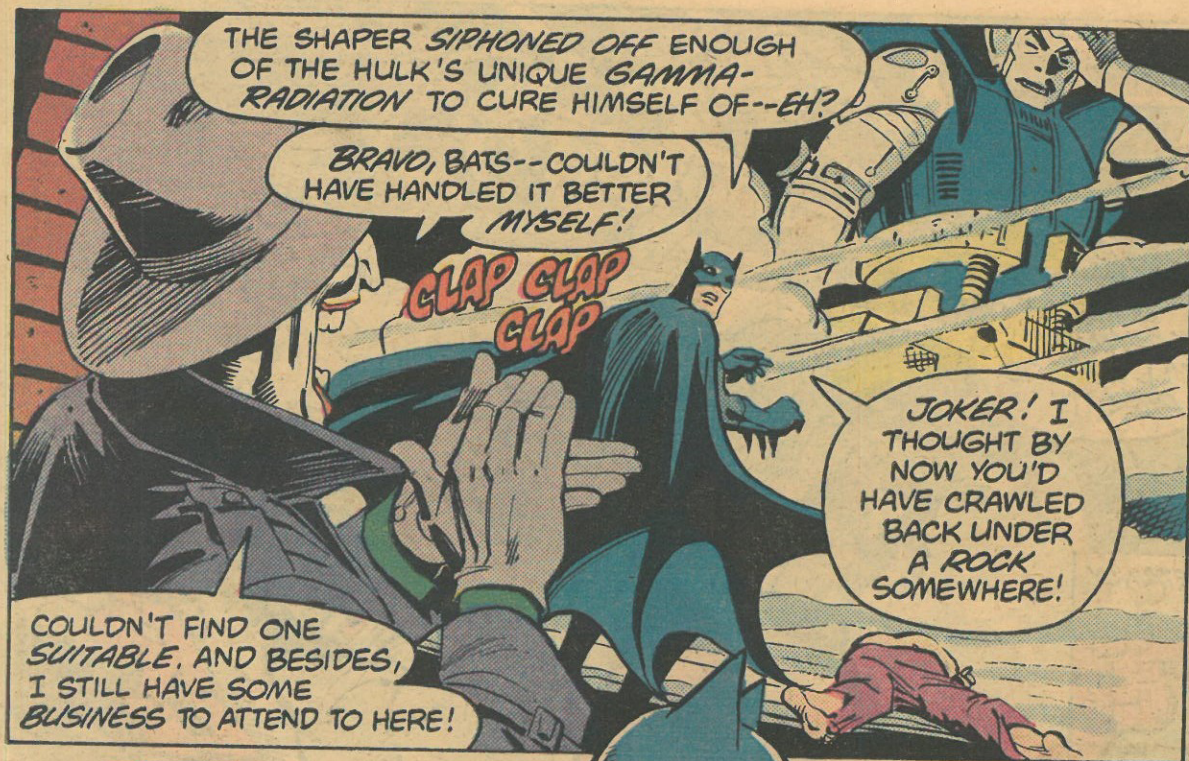
--PIERCES
IT--

--AND THE
SHAPER
SCREAMS
IN AGONY
AS THE
WORLD
EXPLODES
INTO
EMERALD
BRILLIANCE
...

AND WHEN, AT LAST,
THE GREEN LIGHT FADES,
THE SHAPER OF WORLDS
IS ONCE MORE SANE--

--AND THE
RAMPAGING HULK
IS ONCE MORE
ROBERT BRUCE
BANNER!

LOOKS LIKE
IT'S FINALLY
FINISHED!



THE SHAPER SIPHONED OFF ENOUGH OF THE HULK'S UNIQUE GAMMA-RADIATION TO CURE HIMSELF OF--EH?

BRAVO, BATS--COULDN'T HAVE HANDLED IT BETTER MYSELF!

CLAP CLAP CLAP

JOKER! I THOUGHT BY NOW YOU'D HAVE CRAWLED BACK UNDER A ROCK SOMEWHERE!

COULDN'T FIND ONE SUITABLE. AND BESIDES, I STILL HAVE SOME BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO HERE!



WELL, SHAPER-- HOW ABOUT IT?

I'VE HELD UP MY END OF THE DEAL--IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO DO LIKE-WISE!

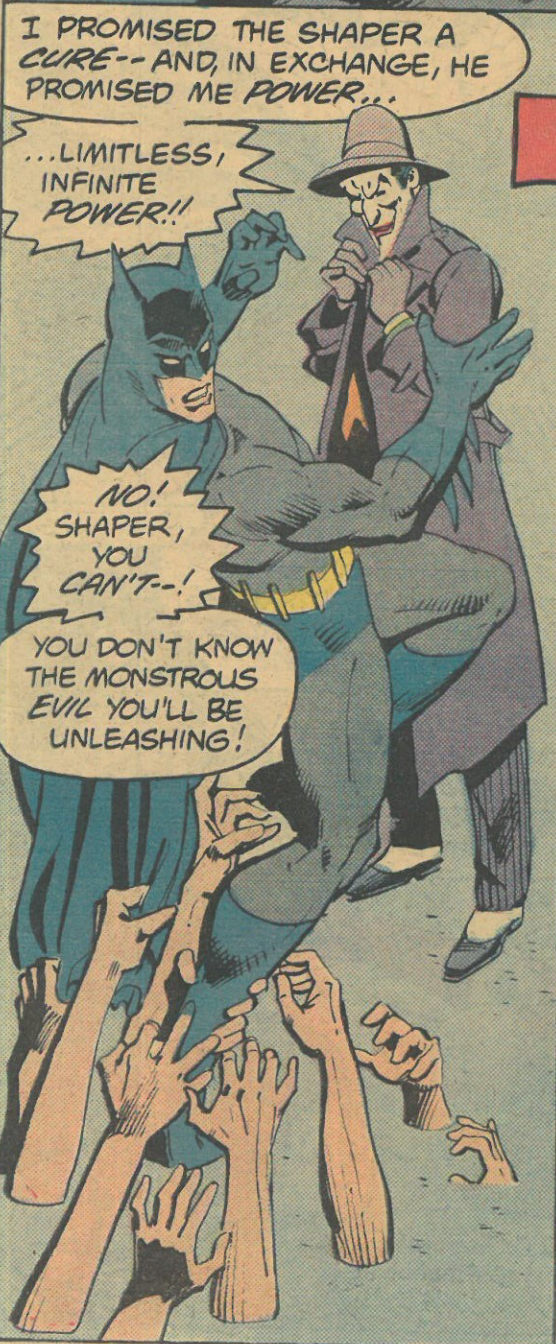
WHAT--?!

NO.



I CAN IMAGINE WHAT'S ON YOUR TWISTED MIND, JOKER--BUT I WON'T ALLOW IT!

FRANKLY, OLD SPORT-- THERE'S NO WAY YOU CAN STOP IT!

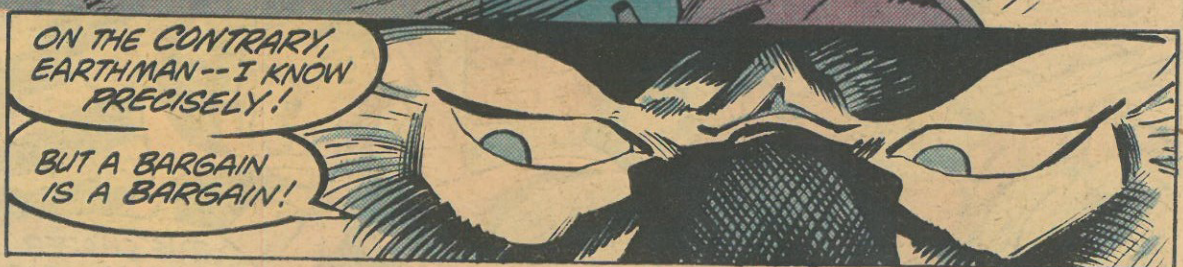


I PROMISED THE SHAPER A CURE-- AND, IN EXCHANGE, HE PROMISED ME POWER...

...LIMITLESS, INFINITE POWER!!

NO! SHAPER, YOU CAN'T--!

YOU DON'T KNOW THE MONSTROUS EVIL YOU'LL BE UNLEASHING!



ON THE CONTRARY, EARTHMAN-- I KNOW PRECISELY!

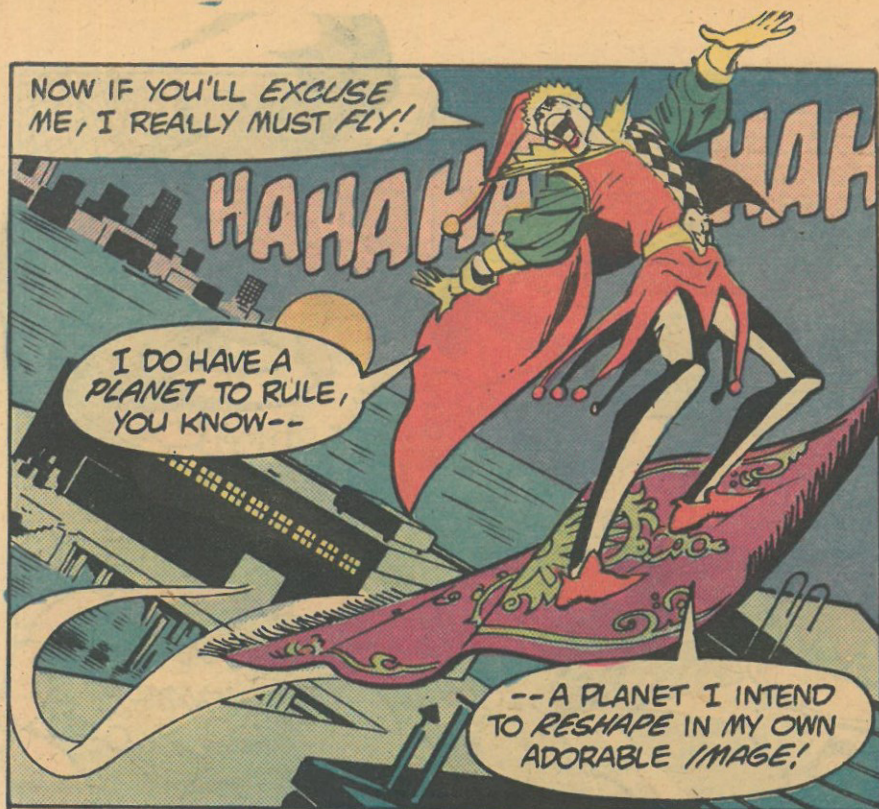
BUT A BARGAIN IS A BARGAIN!



WHATEVER THE JOKER NOW DREAMS, I SHALL MAKE LIVE!

SEE, BATS-- I'M NO LONGER THE JOKER YOU ONCE KNEW!

FROM THIS MOMENT ON-- I'M KING OF THE WORLD!!

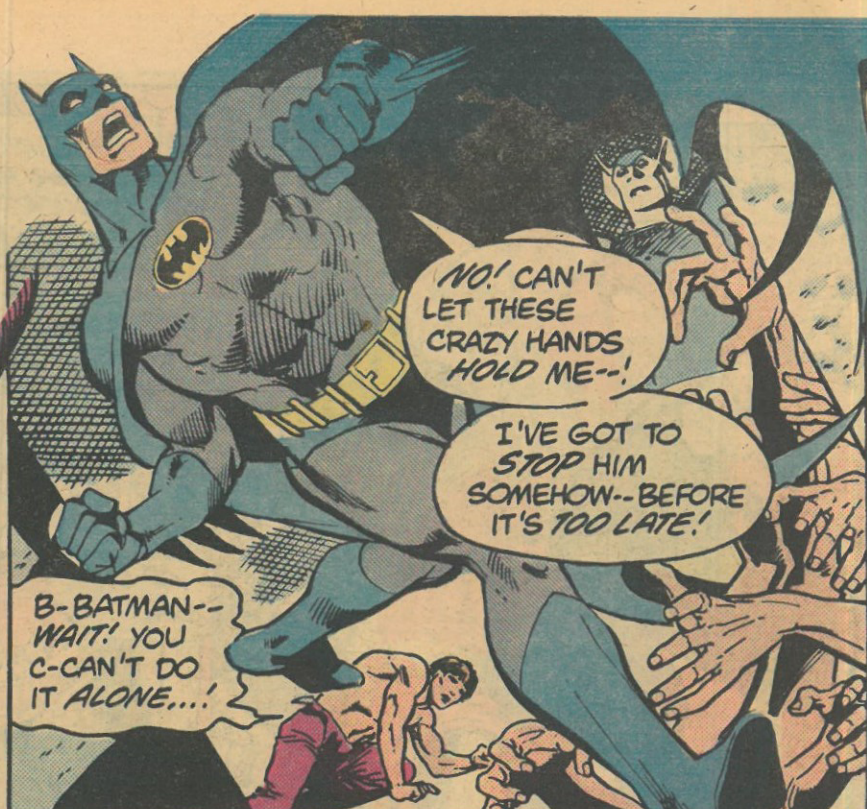


NOW IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I REALLY MUST FLY!

HAHAHAHA

I DO HAVE A PLANET TO RULE, YOU KNOW--

-- A PLANET I INTEND TO RESHAPE IN MY OWN ADORABLE IMAGE!



NO! CAN'T LET THESE CRAZY HANDS HOLD ME--!

I'VE GOT TO STOP HIM SOMEHOW-- BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

B-BATMAN-- WAIT! YOU C-CAN'T DO IT ALONE...!



SHAPER, WE'VE GOT TO GO AFTER HIM-- TRY TO HELP HIM!

THE JOKER CAN KILL BATMAN WITH JUST A THOUGHT!

WHETHER THE BATMAN LIVES OR DIES IS NONE OF MY CONCERN!



BUT IT MUST BE! YOU CAN'T SIMPLY STAND BY AND DO NOTHING!

THE BARGAIN HAS BEEN STRUCK-- IT MUST BE HONORED!



EVEN AT THE EXPENSE OF AN ENTIRE PLANET?

ARE YOU THAT INSENSITIVE-- THAT COLD-BLOODED?

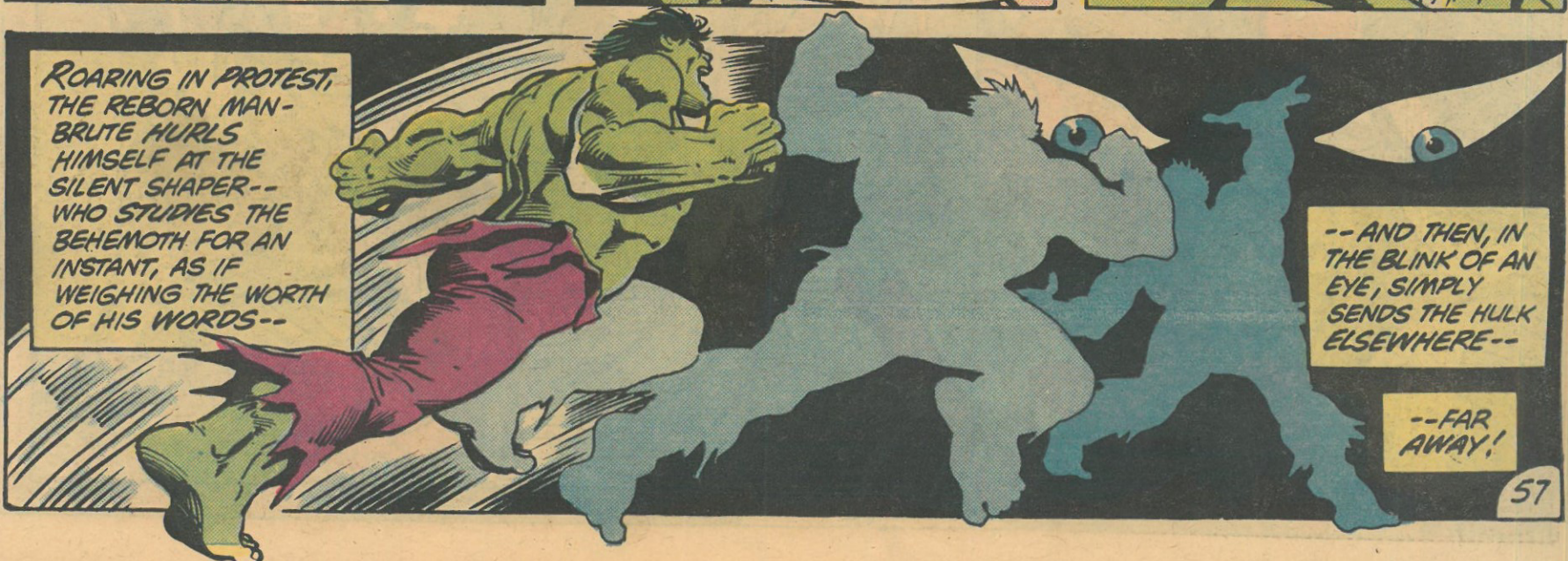


YOU COULD TAKE BACK THE JOKER'S POWER IF YOU WANTED TO--

-- BUT YOU'RE JUST LIKE ALL THE OTHERS... SELFISH, UNFEELING...



... AND FOR THAT-- HULK WILL SMASH!!



ROARING IN PROTEST, THE REBORN MAN-BRUTE HURLS HIMSELF AT THE SILENT SHAPER-- WHO STUDIES THE BEHEMOTH FOR AN INSTANT, AS IF WEIGHING THE WORTH OF HIS WORDS--

-- AND THEN, IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, SIMPLY SENDS THE HULK ELSEWHERE--

-- FAR AWAY!

BACK IN GOTHAM CITY,
MADNESS REIGNS!

REVELING IN HIS POWER, THE MAJESTIC
JOKER HAS TRANSFORMED ITS PROUD
TOWERS INTO SPIRES OF SPUN SUGAR
AND CANDY CANES...

YET, SURPRISINGLY,
ALL THE PEOPLE
HERE ARE HAPPY--

--ALL, THAT
IS, SAVE
ONE!

OKAY,
JOKER--
FUNTIME IS
OVER!

IS IT,
BATS?

I'D SAY THE FUN'S
ONLY BEGINNING!

WHAT--?!

INCREDIBLE!
HE MERELY
GLANCED AT ME--

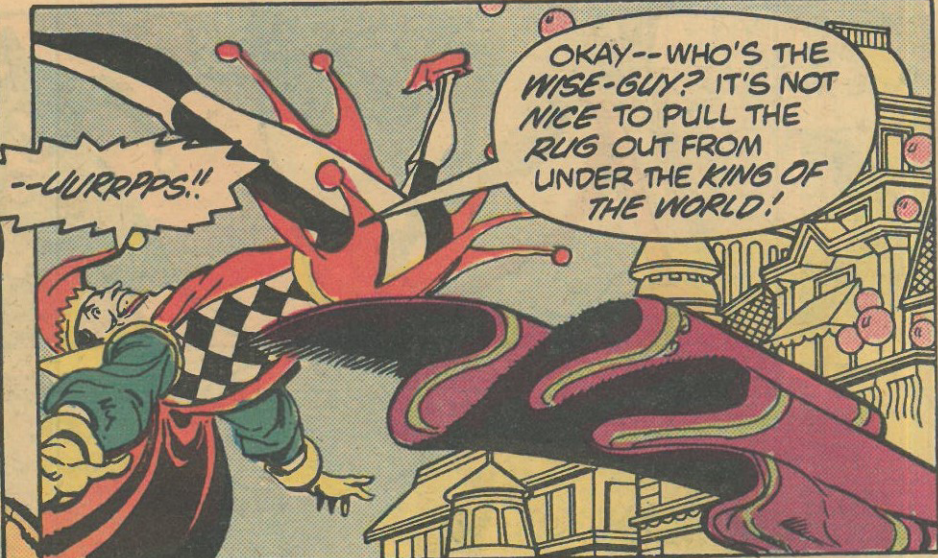
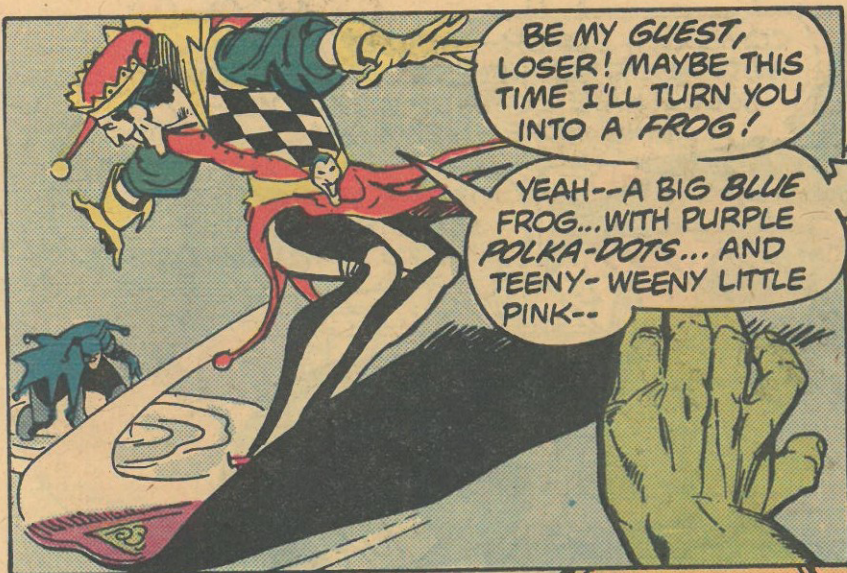
--AND
TURNED ME INTO
A CLOWN?!

APPROPRIATE, WOULDN'T YOU SAY--
ALL THINGS CONSIDERED!

BETTER LICK THE MARSHMALLOW
OFF YOUR STICKY FINGERS AND
GO HOME!

FACE IT, FELLA--
AS OF NOW,
YOU'RE OUT OF
YOUR LEAGUE!

NO WAY, MANIAC! ONCE
I GET FREE OF THIS GLOP,
I'M GOING AFTER
YOU!



WHY, BATMAN--
WHATEVER DO
YOU MEAN?

COME ON, JOKER-- SURELY A MAN
WITH YOUR BOUNDLESS IMAGINATION
COULD HAVE COME UP WITH SOME-
THING MORE INVENTIVE!

THIS
WORLD OF
YOURS LOOKS LIKE
SOMETHING OUT OF
"ALICE IN WONDERLAND"!

"ALICE IN
WONDERLAND"?

WHAT AN
ENCHANTING
IDEA.

AND WITH THE
JOKER, THE IDEA
IS ALL HE NEEDS!

YOU'RE RIGHT,
TWEEDLE-BATS--
THIS IS MUCH
BETTER!

OFF WITH
THEIR
HEADS!

HUH?

BAH! STUPID
CARD-MEN!
IT IS NOT SMART
TO THREATEN
HULK!

THIS IS
SILLY,
JOKER!

AREN'T YOU A
LITTLE TOO OLD
TO BELIEVE IN
FAIRY TALES?

I GAVE YOU CREDIT FOR
BEING MORE OF AN ARTIST!

OH--SO IT'S
ART YOU WANT
NOW, IS IT?

HOW ABOUT
SOMETHING
LIKE THIS?

THIS ISN'T
ART,
JOKER--

--THIS IS
MADNESS!

WRONG-A-
ROO, BATS
OL' BOY!

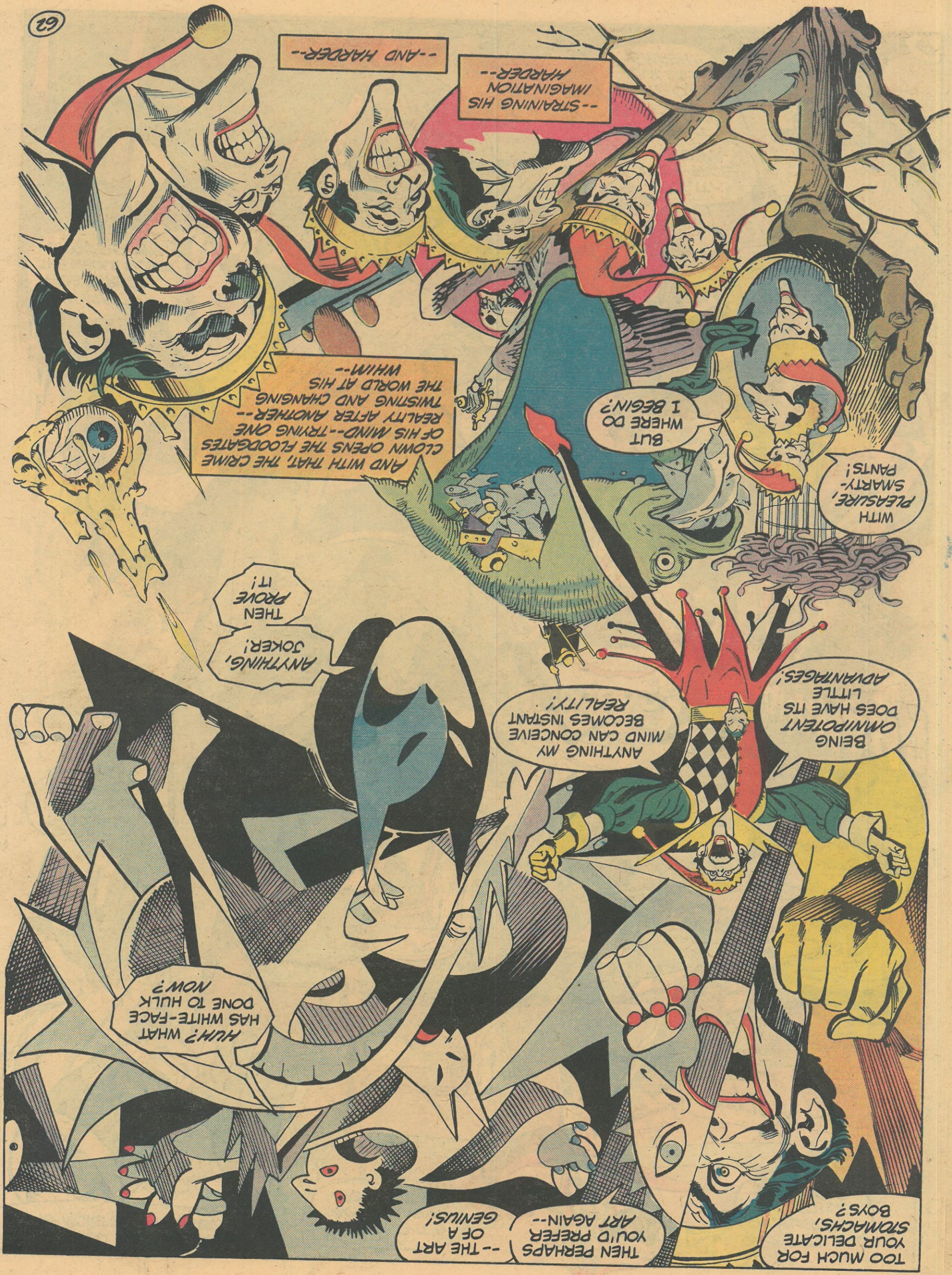
HAHAHAHA

THIS IS
MADNESS!

WHAT--?!
HE'S TURNED
THE WHOLE WORLD
UPSIDE-DOWN!

FIX IT,
WHITE-FACE--
NOW!

FIX IT--OR
HULK WILL
SMASH!!



--AND HARDER--

--STRAINING HIS
IMAGINATION
HARDER--

AND WITH THAT, THE CRIME
CLOWN OPENS THE FLOODGATES
OF HIS MIND--TRYING ONE
REALITY AFTER ANOTHER--
TWISTING AND CHANGING
THE WORLD AT HIS
WHIM--

BUT
WHERE DO
I BEGIN?

WITH
PLEASURE,
SMARTY-
PANTS!

ANYTHING,
JOKER!
THEN
PROVE
IT!

ANYTHING MY
MIND CAN CONCEIVE
BECOMES INSTANT
REALITY!

BEING
OMNIPOTENT
DOES HAVE ITS
LITTLE
ADVANTAGES!

HUH? WHAT
HAS WHITE-FACE
DONE TO HULK
NOW?

--THE ART
OF A
GENIUS!

THEN PERHAPS
YOU'D PREFER
ART AGAIN--

TOO MUCH FOR
YOUR DELICATE
STOMACHS,
BOYS?

--UNTIL THE STRAIN BECOMES MORE THAN EVEN A MAD-MAN CAN ENDURE!

ENOUGH ALREADY!
ENOUGH!!

SO MANY OPTIONS...
SO MANY POSSIBILITIES...

AND WITHOUT THE DREAM, THERE IS NO POWER--

POW!

I NEVER DREAMED IT WOULD BE LIKE THIS!

--AND WITHOUT THE POWER, THE DREAMER SWIFTLY FALLS!

THE JOKER LAPSES INTO BLISSFUL UNCONSCIOUSNESS--

--AND ALL IS RIGHT WITH THE WORLD ONCE MORE--

--OR AT LEAST AS CLOSE AS IT EVER GETS!

BUT HE WAS WRONG, MY BIG GREEN FRIEND!

BAH! STUPID WHITE-FACE THOUGHT HE COULD BEAT HULK!

WHEN IT CAME RIGHT DOWN TO IT, THE JOKER COULDN'T EVEN BEAT HIMSELF!

AND IN AN ISOLATED WATERFRONT WAREHOUSE, A TOWERING ALIEN FIGURE NODS HIS AWESOME HEAD, AS IF IN MUTE AGREEMENT--

--THEN SPEAKS, IN A VOICE LIKE DISTANT THUNDER...

IT IS OVER. THE BARGAIN HAS BEEN FULFILLED!

THUS, I TAKE MY LEAVE OF THIS PRIMITIVE WORLD!

FOR THERE ARE OTHER PLANETS... OTHER DREAMS...

...AND FOR THE SHAPER OF WORLDS, THE DREAM IS THE ONLY REALITY!

IN AN INSTANT, HE IS GONE, FADING INTO THE INFINITE VASTNESS LIKE A WISP OF SMOKE--

...OR SOMEONE'S RANDOM DREAM...

EPILOGUE:

RECLINING MAJESTICALLY, THE JOKER SITS HIS GROTESQUE THRONE, ONCE MORE OMNIPOTENT, ONCE MORE KING OF THE WORLD...

EVERYTHING HE COULD POSSIBLY DESIRE IS HIS AT LAST--

--EVEN IF ONLY IN HIS DEMENTED IMAGINATION!

THE DOCTORS HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO IDEA HOW LONG HE'LL BE LIKE THAT!

FOR HIS SAKE, COMMISSIONER GORDON-- I HOPE IT'S FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE!

I AGREE, BRUCE-- AT LEAST NOW HIS DREAM IS A HAPPY ONE!

AND SPEAKING OF DREAMS, WHAT ABOUT THIS SHAPER CHARACTER YOU MENTIONED?

NONE-- NOT EVEN A TRACE OF HIS WAREHOUSE!

IT SIMPLY CEASED TO EXIST AFTER THE SHAPER DEPARTED!

ANY SIGN OF HIM?

THEN OUR ONLY PROBLEM NOW IS WHAT TO DO ABOUT YOU, DOCTOR BAN-- EH?

YES... I KNOW.

HE'S GONE.

BETTER GET OUT AN A.P.B. ON HIM RIGHT--

NO, JIM-- LET HIM GO.

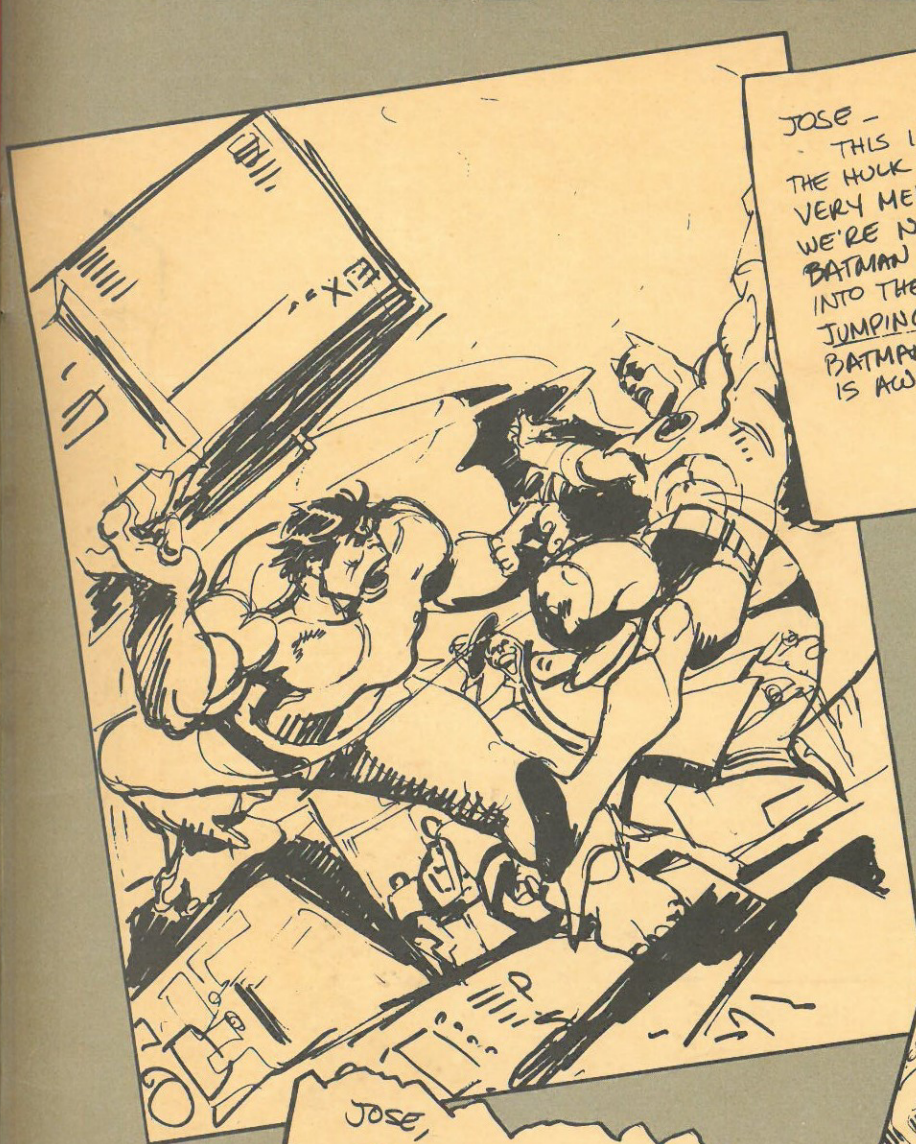
WE OWE HIM THAT MUCH AT LEAST-- A CHANCE TO SOMEDAY FIND WHATEVER IT IS HE'S LOOKING FOR!

YOU KNOW, OLD FRIEND-- WE'RE LUCKY IN A WAY. AT LEAST WE HAVE OUR DREAMS!

BUT ALL BRUCE BANNER WILL EVER KNOW IS A LIVING NIGHTMARE!

THE END-- FOR NOW!

EVOLUTION OF A COVER

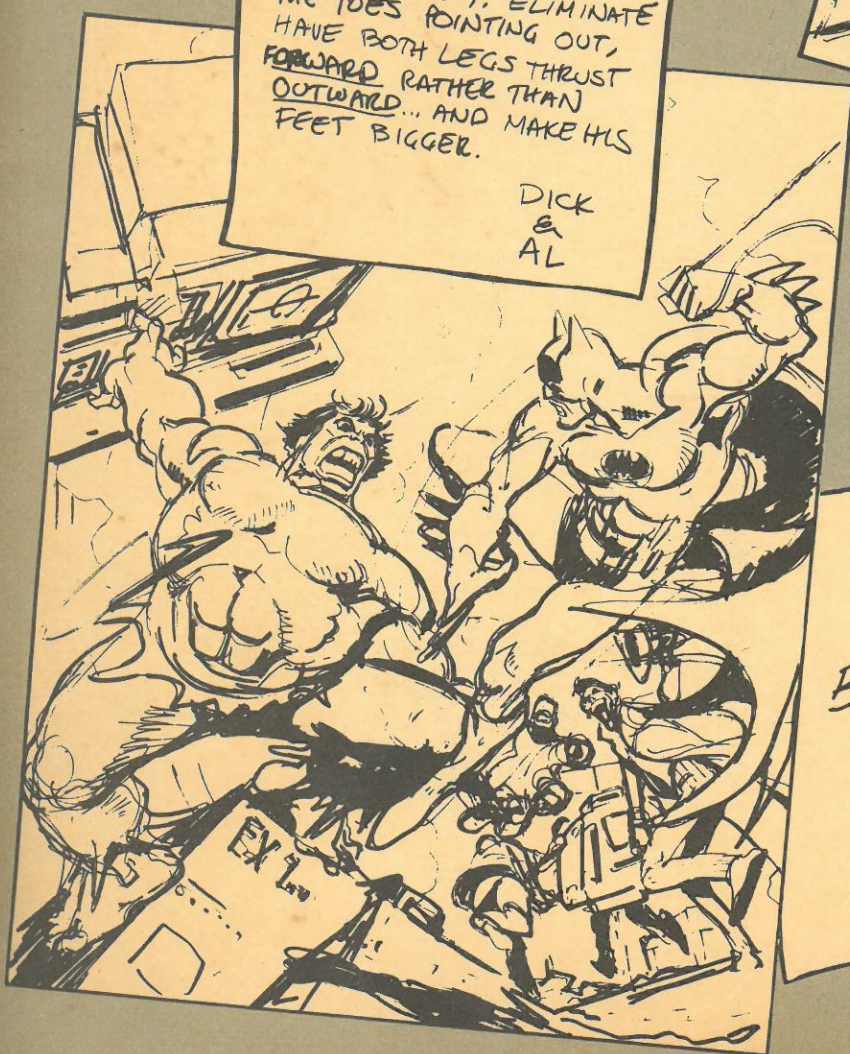


JOSE -
THIS ISN'T RIGHT!
THE HULK DOESN'T LOOK
VERY MENACING AND
WE'RE NOT SURE IF
BATMAN IS SWINGING
INTO THE PICTURE OR
JUMPING IN. ALSO
BATMAN'S RIGHT LEG
IS AWKWARD.
DICK GIORDANO
& AL MILGROM

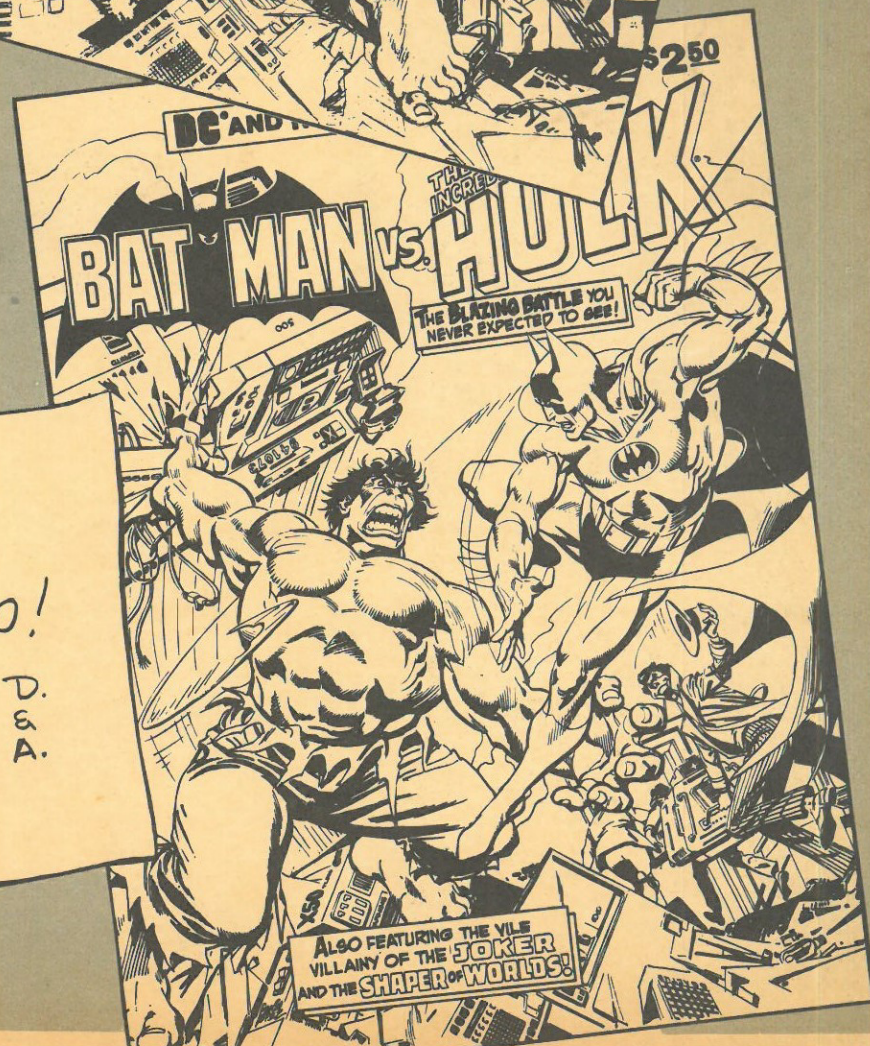
JOSE,
BATMAN IS PERFECT! SO
IS THE REST OF THE
COVER, EXCEPT...
THE HULK! THOUGH HE
LOOKS A BIT MORE
MENACING THAN THE
FIRST DRAFT, THE
FORESHORTENING ON HIS
TORSO AND HIS "DAINTY"
LEFT FOOT JUST DOESN'T
LOOK RIGHT.
DICK G.
AL & M.



JOSE,
GREAT! EXCEPT FOR THE
HULK'S LEGS... THEY'RE
STILL CLUMSY. ELIMINATE
THE TOES POINTING OUT,
HAVE BOTH LEGS THRUST
FORWARD RATHER THAN
OUTWARD... AND MAKE HIS
FEET BIGGER.
DICK
& AL



BINGO!
D.
& A.





**THE MIGHTY MAN-BRUTE AND
THE MASKED MANHUNTER--
SIDE-BY-SIDE AGAINST
THEIR GREATEST FOES!**

